Stourbridge
CHRONICLE

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WE'RE THE PARTY OF TRUE BREXIT, SAYS UKIP LEADER ON VISIT

UKIP's Paul Nuttall and Bill Etheridge, centre, stroll around meeting voters at Dudley Market

PAUL Nuttall said UKIP was the only party to have campaigned for a 'true Brexit' as he issued a rallying cry urging voters in Dudley to back his party's candidates.

The UKIP leader hit the campaign trail in Dudley town centre on Tuesday where he was greeted by more than 100 supporters on a stroll through the market.

There were cries of 'Go on Paul!' as he walked around Market Place, before heading into Roger Scott's Menswear on Stone Street.

Mr Nuttall, who was accompanied by Dudley councillor, West Midlands MEP and parliamentary candidate for Dudley North Bill Etheridge on his visit to the town, vowed that UKIP would stand strong and provide effective opposition to the Conservative Government.

He said: "We are the only party going into the election with a clear commitment to cut immigration to sensible numbers.

"And we are the only party that has really campaigned for a true Brexit."

He added that he was hoping for another strong showing from UKIP in Dudley following the party's substantial gains at the 2015 General Election.

Back then almost 25,000 people in the borough voted for UKIP's Parliamentary candidates in Dudley North, Dudley South and Stourbridge.

Mr Nuttall said Brexit would be the key issue of this year's election campaign, but cast doubt on the Prime Minister's ability to get the best deal for Britain in her negotiations with the European Union.

"I think the EU Commission is beginning to play hardball, but I am not convinced that Theresa May will get the best deal for British people," he said.

"That is why it is important to get UKIP MPs elected."

Mr Nuttall is set to stand in Boston & Skegness, where he will take on incumbent Tory Matt Warman.

In the EU referendum, the constituency's town of Boston returned the the highest vote in support of Brexit, at 75.6 per cent.

No appetite for another battle, says spokesman

MOSQUE MOVE BID COST £300K

DUDLEY Central Mosque spent almost £300,000 in its failed battle to move to a new site in the town, accounts have revealed.

The cash included donations from the community to help draw up plans and pay legal costs. Leaders attempted to keep their bid to build a new mosque alive by appealing against Dudley Council's refusal of the project in Hall Street – but it ultimately came to nothing.

It comes as Muslim leaders say they are 'disappointed' by the lack of communication with the council over finding a new site for the mosque since the end of the long-running legal battle over the Hall Street site

The legal fight against the council was led by the Dudley Muslim Association (DMA), which also ploughed in hundreds of thousands of pounds. The central mosque, a registered charity, also helped by raising money.

Report by Richard Guttridge

Crucial

Ammar Khan, a member and former treasurer of the central mosque, admitted it had been painful to see so much money go into the project and not be any closer to securing their ambition of having a new mosque in Dudley.

He said it was crucial that a new site was found in the town but that no plans were currently being drawn up.

Published accounts showed the Dudley Central Mosque and Muslim Community Centre spent £141,113 on the 'new mosque project' in 2014 and £149,277 in 2015 during the court battle with Dudley Council.

Mr Khan said: "These expenses were done for the new mosque project in regards to planning approval, solicitors and legal expenses.

"It is a big disappointment for the community because Dudley Central Mosque is a charity. It has been almost 20 years of struggle and we are nowhere.

"There are no plans at the moment for a new site. We have received no communication from the council.

"We are disappointed but believe and hope the time will come to find another site."

He added: "The current mosque is listed so cannot be expanded. The membership is growing and the mosque is very busy and difficult to manage."

The battle over the ill-fated plan for a mosque at Hall Street dragged on for more than a decade and Mr Khan stressed any new site would have to be right for everyone to avoid another costly row.

He said: "There is no appetite for another battle. We don't want to go into court and fight anyone."

The saga over the mosque was finally brought to an end in 2015 when Court of Appeal judges unanimously ruled in favour of Dudley Council over its move to buy back the land in Hall Street from the DMA.

Matthew enjoys the high life

Matthew Bates, aged six, and his seven-year-old sister Chloe in the helicopter at Halfpenny Green

HUNDREDS enjoyed a day of wings and wheels at Halfpenny Green Airshow. And one little boy got a special treat, being taken up in the skies for his own helicopter ride.

The story of Matthew Bates and his mother Kellie touched organiser Roy Targowski so much that he arranged for the family to go up in a helicopter at the airshow. Matthew, six, has Williams Syndrome that causes a number of developmental delays.

His mother Kellie, 39, has been making Easter bonnets in aid of the Williams Syndrome Charity, collecting a total of £451. Roy said: "My own youngest son is disabled and I know how hard it can be for parents to get out and do things with their children. so I wanted to give him something special."

Matthew, from The Straits in Lower Gornal, who attends Woodsetton School, was also joined by older sister Chloe, seven, and father Andrew.

FATAL

Hit-and-run driver kills pedestrian, 34

A MAN died following a hit-and-run road accident in Halesowen.

The 34-year-old was walking in Cherry Street just after midnight on Monday when he was hit by a dark-coloured hatchback.

Medics battled to save the pedestrian but he was pronounced dead a short time later.

Police have appealed for anyone with information to come forward and are urged to call West Midlands Police on 101.

Detective Superintendent Tom Chisholm, from Force CID, said: "We have already spoken to a number of witnesses who were at the scene. But we urgently need to speak to anyone who witnessed what happened or has any information."

POLITICS

Voting takes place for region's mayor

THE people of the West Midlands vote today (Thursday) for their first 'Metro' Mayor in charge of a region covering the Black Country, Birmingham, Solihull and Coventry.

The candidates are James Burn (Green), Pete Durnell (UKIP), Beverley Nielsen (Liberal Democrat), Sion Simon (Labour Co-op), Graham Stevenson (Communist), Andy Street (Conservative). The move follows a devolution deal between the Government and the West Midlands Combined Authority.

TRAFFIC

Red route rolls out to stop bad parking

A £4,000 scheme to stamp out bad parking in Cradley Heath saw work start on a new 'red route' begin this week.

It means vehicles will be banned from parking on a mile-long stretch of Forge Lane, Lower High Street, Foxoak Street and Upper High Street.

Yellow lines were being removed and the red lines put down overnight on Tuesday with the new rules coming into force from today (Thursday).

The work is being done to prevent parking on the pavements and on narrow stretches of the road, which has been causing problems.

INSIDE

A HOLE LOT OF ROAD TROUBLE

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Pickpocket targeted elderly on buses

Daniel Glowacki – jailed

A PROLIFIC pickpocket who targeted elderly passengers on public transport has been jailed for two and a half years.

Daniel Glowacki, of Terry Street, Dudley, targeted victims using the West Midlands bus network.

One of his victims, an 88-year-old woman, was waiting to get off the bus when Glowacki shoved past and put his arm around her to confuse the lady while dipping inside her purse.

On another occasion, he pushed into a 74-year-old man who had just got to his feet to get off a bus as a distraction to swipe his wallet. The pensioner's bank cards were later used in various shops to purchase items and to withdraw cash from ATMs.

After a national appeal, information was received about Glowacki and he was arrested on March 16.

CCTV footage on National Express buses provided crucial evidence and clearly showed the 27-year-old targeting elderly, vulnerable victims.

Callous

Glowacki admitted eight offences of theft when he appeared at Wolverhampton Crown Court.

Pc Sean Lowe, of Dudley Police, said: "He is a callous, prolific offender who targeted the elderly. We hope this sentencing will offer some comfort to the victims. It was a complex investigation involving extensive trawls of CCTV systems to obtain and secure the necessary evidence."

Tony Dallison, Head of Security at National Express West Midlands, said: "We will not tolerate people stealing from our customers. We'd like to thank the Safer Travel Police teams for their hard work putting a stop to these despicable crimes."

Wolves fans banned for trouble at match

WOLVES supporters caught throwing plastic bottles, lighters, a broken seat and a coin during a derby match with Birmingham City have been banned from matches for three years.

The six men were each given a football banning order following the February 24 Championship league fixture, which was labelled as one of the 'worst occasions' of crowd behaviour.

The disorder broke out when Blues striker David Davis, a former Wolves player, celebrated the 2-1 win in front of Wolves fans at Molineux, Walsall Magistrate's Court heard.

The group, who had attended the match as individuals, then began to lob items towards the pitch and at Blues fans.

More than 80 seats inside the stadium were broken and dozens of coins thrown.

Paul Deakin, aged 54, from Charles Street, Willenhall; Iain Hills, 20, of Clifton Street, Sedgley; Alex Price, 26, of Pale Street, Dudley; Jamie Smith, 32, from Park Lane, Wolverhampton, George White, 18, from Warash Close, Wolverhampton; and Luke Elsmore, 30, from Burton Old Road East, Staffordshire, all pleaded guilty to throwing a missile at the spectators area.

Deakin and Smith threw a plastic bottle, Price and White threw a lighter, Elsmore lobbed a chair and Hills hurled a coin.

Miss Val Hart, prosecuting, said: "It was a high-risk match with 150 police officers working. It was one of the worst occasions of in-crowd behaviour during a match.

Intense

"Mr Deakin said he retaliated by throwing a bottle after one was thrown at him drenching him in beer. Price said he had just 'blew his lid' and others claimed it was an intense game and in the heat of the moment."

All had to pay a £100 fine, £135 in costs and a £30 victim surcharge.

Mike Tanney, defending five, said: "All of them regret what they have done and I feel that there should be an allowance for the context. The genesis of this was not the fault of anyone in the crowd, although their behaviour was wrong." Four of the men had no previous convictions and the majority were season ticket holders

Revamp will zoo-m in on animals

Adam Wrench, zoo keeper, getting ready for the revamp at the Castle Hill attraction

WORK has started on a £90,000 revamp of a farmyard building at Dudley Zoo.

The work on the popular attraction will allow visitors to get even closer to the animals. Contractors are demolishing the current barn, which will be replaced with one double its size, hoping to get the new-look facility open in time for June.

The work is a key part of major developments at the popular attraction, which is celebrating its 80th anniversary year. Matt Lewis, zoo manager, said: "The extension will allow us to extend our contact opportunities as there'll be lots more small and furry animals in there for our younger visitors to meet as well as the popular farm animals.

"We're also hoping to include fish, invertebrates and amphibians and we'll be reintroducing leaf cutter ants too, a species we haven't had here at DZG for over 20 years."

The bigger barn will also allow the zoo to expand its education sessions.

A refurbishment of the outdoor area will take place later this year.

The zoo is gearing up for its 80th anniversary celebrations which will include a sponsored onesie walk to raise money for a new separate outdoor space for its great apes.

The 5km walk around the zoo's 40-acre site takes place on Saturday and it is hoped will raise £800,000 to provide a new home for its four great apes.

Man killed workmate with one vicious punch

A MAN from Yorkshire has been jailed for more than eight years after being found guilty of killing his colleague with a single punch.

Dean Hartley unleashed a vicious uppercut on Karl Swift in Halesowen town centre, knocking him unconscious. Mr Swift, 33, hit his head on the ground and died in hospital two days later.

Hartley, 30, lied to police claiming he found Mr Swift on the ground and that he must have fallen over.

After being charged he admitted intending to pervert the course of justice but denied manslaughter. A a jury took just one hour and 22 minutes to unanimously find him guilty.

Judge James Burbidge QC sentenced him to a total of eight years and three months at Wolverhampton Crown Court.

The court heard Hartley had five previous convictions for violence and was subject to a suspended sentence for battery at the time he killed Mr Swift on September 8.

The pair were among a group of six workmates who had been drinking at the William Shenstone pub. They had been arguing about football. Hartley, of Burnaby Crescent, Sheffield, told police he had been irritated by Mr Swift.

The group, who had all travelled from Yorkshire for work, was thrown out of the pub on Queensway, but Mr Swift had left on his own a few minutes earlier. Two men who admitted attempting to pervert the course of justice will be sentenced later.

Custody escapee found in Spain

A 20-year-old from a Black Country residential care centre for people with mental health problems has pleaded guilty at Wolverhampton Crown Court to escaping from custody.

Jordan Goodwin, also known as Jordan Hagan, absconded from the Huntercombe Centre in Underhill Street, Langley on March 13, after being made the subject of an indefinite hospital order at Derby Crown Court in 2011.

A European Arrest Warrant was issued four days later and he was arrested in Spain soon afterwards. He was flown from Madrid to Birmingham On March 24 and arrested on landing.

Mr Simon Hanns, defending, said: "He believes he is somebody who should now be in society." He was remanded in custody for a psychiatric report.

Chance to enjoy the Motown hits

A SOUL and Motown gig is being held at a live music venue. The Ultimate Soul and Motown Night will take place at Brierley Hill Civic on May 12.

Doors open from 8pm. Tickets cost £6 or £5 in advance. To book call 0121 515 4180.

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Death driver warned to expect jail sentence

A MOTORIST from Wordsley is facing a lengthy prison sentence after admitting causing the death of a 66-year-old man by dangerous driving in Stourbridge.

Wolverhampton Crown Court heard that Ryan Freeth had been on his mobile phone and speeding shortly before his car hit Leslie Marks in Amblecote High Street.

Mr Malcolm Morse, prosecuting, explained that two experts had different opinions about exactly how fast Freeth's Vauxhall Corsa was going when the fatal accident happened on November 29, 2015.

He continued: "We are now in agreement that the dangerous driving contained the use of a mobile phone whilst in motion approaching the scene of the accident.

"The speed, although not assessable, was inappropriate and significantly in excess of the 30 mph limit."

Mr Talbir Singh, defending, said Freeth, who was of previous good character, had undertaken a significant amount of counselling since the incident.

Mr Singh added: "He understands that custody is a very clear option for him."

The defendant from Marshall Crescent, Wordsley was remanded on bail for pre sentence reports until May 25.

Judge Simon Ward told Freeth: "Please be under no illusion. Anybody convicted of causing another person's death by dangerous driving must expect a lengthy prison sentence."

Councillor leaves UKIP for the Tories

A UKIP councillor has defected to the Tories because he believes the party has become 'too radical'.

Councillor Paul Bradley, who represents the Amblecote ward, said he has gone as far as he can with UKIP following the successful Brexit campaign.

He has switched to the Conservatives because he feels uncomfortable some of the parties 'national flagstone issues'.

But he added that he wished the UKIP group in Dudley well.

Councillor Bradley said: "I have come as far as I can with the party. The national side has taken a much more radical stance.

"It will take them back years. It is too radical and it is not comfortable."

Work set to close road for a month

A ROAD is Kingswinford will be closed both ways until June 6 with delays expected.

Ridge Road is closed due to gas main work between Cot Lane and Kingsley Road.

Hospital gets £1m to invest in A&E

DUDLEY'S hospital trust has been awarded £1 million in Government funding to invest in its accident and emergency department.

Bosses at Dudley NHS Foundation Trust will spend the money on developing a new urgent care centre at Russells Hall Hospital.

The facility will help staff deal with patients coming into A&E more efficiently, relieving hospital resources and meeting waiting time targets.

The funding has come from the Department of Health, which allocated £56m to hospitals around the country, earlier this month.

A spokesman for the trust said: "We are absolutely thrilled to be receiving £1m funding to relieve pressure on our accident and emergency department. This really is very good news for all of our patients.

"We plan to use the money to build a brand new urgent care centre integrated with our emergency department. This will allow a centralised point of access for patients who will be directed to A&E or the UCC depending on their clinical need.

Benefit

"Having the two services side by side will mean patients will benefit from a seamless service with clinicians from primary care and the hospital working even more closely together."

The money from the Government for hospitals, totalling £55.98m, forms part of the £100m A&E capital funding outlined in the spring Budget by Chancellor Philip Hammond.

It is hoped that the cash can help hospitals across the country meet A&E targets of admitting, transferring and discharging 95 per cent of patients within four hours and ease pressure in time for winter.

Hospital trusts have outlined plans to achieve this, which include being able to stream primary care and place GP practices within their A&E departments. Seventy NHS hospitals nationwide have received the funding.

Russells Hall faced a challenging winter, which saw record numbers filing into A&E, putting strain on resources.

£120k extra made by trust on staff parking

THE trust which runs Russells Hall Hospital has made £120,000 extra since it put up parking charges for staff, it has been revealed.

Costs for hospital workers were increased during 2012/13 and it has now emerged in the three years that followed the Dudley Group NHS Trust raked in an extra £120,000.

The information was revealed under the Freedom of Information Act and showed large increases in cash generated from the pockets of doctors, nurses and other staff.

Money from staff parking brought in £323,000 in 2011/12 but a rise in charges saw the total rise to £389,000 the following year.

It then increased to £432,000 in 2013/14 and £443,000 in 2014/15, which were the most recent figures made available.

Hospital bosses said the rise in money generated was down to parking fees going up.

When the changes were made, chiefs defended the move and said they 'have to look at opportunities to increase our income'.

However, they also pointed out workers had the opportunity to sign up to a salary sacrifice scheme which would see them pay less due to savings on tax and national insurance.

Shameful

The hikes for staff parking were then followed by rises for patients in 2015, which were described as 'shameful' by campaigners.

More than 2,600 staff use the car park on a regular basis.

Full-time workers pay £19.50 a month, which went up from £15, while staff who use the site less often now pay £9.75 a month compared to £7.50 in 2011/12. Trust chief executive Diane Wake said: "As highlighted in the Freedom of Information response, car parking charges for staff increased after 2011/12."

Councillor Paul Brothwood, UKIP group leader in Dudley, described the amount staff are being made to pay for parking as 'immoral'.

He added: "These poor staff have had limited pay rises over a substantial period of time. Hospitals are saying they are short of money and they have got to charge staff and patients more. It's nonsense, the money is not being spent on the right things."

In January, it was revealed that every single parking fine appealed at Russells Hall Hospital over the financial year 2015/16 was successfully overturned.

Air today and not gone tomorrow

Popular Stourbridge skate park Unit3Sixty needs funding support from the public for general repairs

MONEY raised for a skate and bike park in Stourbridge will help maintain its facilities for future generations, its boss says.

A £5,000 fundraising campaign has been launched for Unit3Sixty skate park, which opened on Mill Race Lane in Stourbridge three years ago.

Boss Gavin Pardoe said the money will go to repairing parts of the park, including the top of some of the wooden skate ramps.

He said: "We have this great skate park for young people in Stourbridge. We started it because there used to be one around 10 years ago where the Tesco now stands but it was demolished.

"Now we want to maintain the skate park and have the money to make the needed repairs. We do not get any regular funding from authorities, so to keep the costs down for the users we must find money for repairs." The skate park, used by around 500 people a week, was set up in 2014 by Gavin and his wife, Serena.

The facility has previously received grants, including funding via the National Lottery and Sport England. Gavin added: "The only other way of funding the repairs is to increase the price of the entry fee, which we don't want to do."

See www.crowdfunder.co.uk/repair-maintenance-modernisation-and-improvement

NEWS IN BRIEF

TV comic Joe in go-kart appeal

BIRMINGHAM comedian Joe Lycett is backing a bid to replace go-karts wrecked by vandals – as donations raced towards £1,000 in just days.

Staff at Sycamore Adventure Centre in Dudley, which offers free play sessions for youngsters, launched an appeal for £3,000 to replace the karts left beyond repair after vandals scaled a fence at the centre.

Having made a donation, TV comic Joe, who has appeared on Taskmaster and Live At The Apollo, took to Twitter to urge his 169,000 followers to back the campaign.

Emily cooks up place in finals

A CATERING student has made it through to the grand finals of a national competition, taking part in a range of cooking challenges.

Emily Winnitt, who attends Halesowen College, was chosen as a judge's wild card entry and took part in the grand final of the Nestle Toque d'Or competition at the end of March.

She will find out at an awards ceremony at the Dorchester Hotel in London on May 12 if she is a winner.

During the competition she had to cook a fine dining meal for 60 people and complete a wine tasting course.

Bishop opens his garden for causes

THE Bishop of Dudley is opening his garden to the public for one day.

The Rt Rev Graham Usher will be raising funds for the Three Choirs Festival and the Churches Housing Association of Dudley and district's women's refuge.

The garden at The Bishop's House, Bishop's Walk, Cradley Heath, will be open from 11.30am to 4pm on Saturday, May 13.

Admission is £3 for adults and free for accompanied children under 12.

Free hall stall offer for teenage entrepreneurs

YOUNG entrepreneurs can have a free stall at the first Teenage Market to be held Himley Hall and Park.

The Teenage Market is taking place on Sunday, June 18, from 11am to 5pm. Anyone aged 13 to 23 is eligible. Twenty stalls are up for grabs on a first-come, first-served basis. Young musicians and entertainers are also encouraged to apply for a performance slot. To book, go to www.theteenagemarket.co.uk/events/himley-hall-teenage-market/

Mini motorist hurt

A WOMAN motorist in a Mini was taken to hospital for a check up after complaining of neck pain following a crash with a Honda Accord on Saturday.

The smash in Sedgley Road East, Tipton was at 12.30pm. The Mini passenger and Honda driver were unhurt.

COUNTY NEWS

Railway trespass number on rise

MORE people than ever in the West Midlands are endangering their lives by trespassing on rail tracks, new figures reveal.

There were 588 trespass incidents in the region last year – a rise of two per cent compared to 2015 – according to data from Network Rail and the British Transport Police.

There were 58 children caught by police too, with boys aged 14 to 16 being the main offenders and peaks coinciding with school holidays.

Insp Dave Rams, from West Midlands British Transport Police, said: "We believe the number of children we encounter trespassing every year is just the tip of the iceberg."

Appeal is made on tackling pollution

CAMPAIGNERS have urged West Midlands mayor candidates to commit to tackling air pollution.

A doctor from Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Hospitals Trust and academics from the University of Birmingham have signed a letter to the candidates. They said: "From Wolverhampton to Coventry, legal limits of air pollution are broken in every local authority in the West Midlands. We need our leaders to act."

Sarah Gray, of the British Lung Foundation, said: "Air pollution is pernicious in the way that it unknowingly finds its way into our respiratory system."

Lions roar back in 140-mile ride

TWO Midland members of a national organisation cycled from Blackpool to Birmingham in aid of charity.

Simon Moss and Japp De Jonge from Birmingham arrived in the city on Monday.

They attended the annual convention of Lions Clubs of England Scotland, Wales and Ireland which was held in the seaside town on Saturday – and cycled back.

Their journey was more than 140 miles which raised funds for charity Hearing Dogs for the Deaf.

Comic's show is Wehn upgrade takes place

COMEDIAN Henning Wehn's Wolverhampton show has been upgraded to the Civic Hall due popular demand.

The German comic was due to perform at the Wulfrun Hall later this year, but has now been moved.

He will now be at the Civic on October 27. Tickets ara available at wolvescivic.co.uk.

It's all red at library

THE Library of Birmingham was lit up in red to mark the 50th anniversary of housing charity Crisis, which is campaigning for more research to tackle homelessness. The city council showed its support for the charity last Monday night.

Life for man who shot teenager dead

A GUNMAN who fatally wounded a teenager in a parked car before hiding from police in Dudley has been jailed for life.

Isaiah Wright-Young, of no fixed abode, was one of two men who opened fire on the car in which Kenichi Phillips sat while it was parked in Ladywood, Birmingham, in March 2016.

Wright-Young, 37, went into hiding after the murder but was discovered living in a flat in Dudley by police seven months later.

Kenichi, who was 18, was a passenger in the Seat Ibiza and was struck in the jaw and neck by one of the bullets. Two others in the car escaped uninjured but Kenichi collapsed and died in nearby alleyway.

Disharn Downie, 18, was arrested and convicted of Kenichi's murder, of attempted murder and attempted grievous bodily harm. He was jailed for 21 years in November. Dean Silvera, 37, was jailed for seven and a half years after he was found guilty of assisting an offender.

Isaiah Wright-Young was arrested in October in Dudley and charged with murder, attempted murder, attempted grievous bodily harm and possession of firearms. He will serve at least 33 years.

Detective Inspector Jim Munro, who led the investigation, said: "Both Downie and Wright-Young intended to kill the occupants and it's only through luck alone that others weren't seriously hurt as a result."

Payouts and few repairs but still hole lot of fury

TOP OF THE POTS

POTHOLES are making headlines again this week with more reports of damaged roads from readers, some good news in Staffordshire and anger in the Black Country as one road is repaired – ahead of major works!

In Pensnett, council workers were spotted filling in holes on the High Street sparking comment on Twitter as the road is set undergo roadworks.

There is a £6 million scheme planned which will see it widened and have new pedestrian crossings. However ward councillor Judy Foster said action was needed now to deal with the hazardous road. She said: "The new scheme is at the High Oak End and we are aware that there are some ruts in the road at the junction with High Street near that location which might pose a hazard for pedestrians."

Meanwhile, work has at last begun repairing a succession of potholes and sunken drains around the junction 11 island of the M6.

Compensation

Figures revealed by the Chronicle last week showed payouts of £3,360 had been made to drivers for damage caused in the area over the last four years. In total compensation payments of almost £350,000 have been paid out by Staffordshire County Council because of damage caused by potholes in the last four years – with one driver receiving more than £4,600, the figures have revealed.

But reports are still coming in. Glenn Sealey of Cannock sent us a picture of a severe pothole on the road out of Cannock, in Heath Hayes.

He said: "For anyone hitting it goes in on a downward slide, and then hits the almost vertical wall meaning a small car could become trapped and as it would be under way a serious incident would occur. A large car could sustain damage. Anyone on a motorcycle is going to be off with the consequences of being hit by other traffic."

Jo Well reported a number of large deep potholes on the A449 between Stewponey junction and Lawnswood Rd junction in Kingswinford. She said: "There is a strong possibility of an accident on this busy, fast road as drivers swerve to avoid them."

Adrian Gallis complained that Wombourne in South Staffordshire had been 'seemingly forgotten by Staffordshire highways department'.

Richard Sears reported a pothole at the entrance of the Chase Golf Club and Spa

Glenn Sealey, of Cannock, sent us a picture of a deep pothole on a road in Heath Hayes

A reader sent us a picture of this deep hole in Love Lane, Great Wyrley, regularly used as a rat run

In Pensnett workers were filling in holes on the High Street which is due to undergo roadworks

He said: "The whole village is blighted by potholes but one of the worst roads is a 200m stretch of Station Road starting at Ounsdale Road, there are at least 20 holes, some 3ins deep and others up to 3ft long. The potholes also continue down Bull Meadow Lane. Some holes in these roads were paint marked for repair months ago."

But even the repairs are being questioned. Staffordshire reader Richard Sears, of Hednesford, reported a pothole at the entrance of the Chase Golf Club and Spa on Pottal Pool Road in Cannock in February.

He said: "On the 27th April I received an email from Staffordshire County Council informing me that the pothole had been fixed. On the 29th April I visited the Golf Club and took the opportunity to inspect the repaired pothole. Indeed a repair had been made to the damaged area but unsurprisingly because the repair could best be described as shoddy, a pothole is already developing."

And another reader sent us a picture of a deep hole in Love Lane, Great Wyrley, which is regularly used as a rat run for traffic trying to escape the A34 Walsall Road through the village.

The Chronicle has invited readers to help us find the most pothole-plagued roads in the area which we will be flagging up to highways authorities and pushing for priority repairs. We will be revealing the most problematic areas soon.

Accused says he 'did not know' about guns deal

A MAN accused of 'pulling the strings' when two guns were handed to a criminal has claimed he thought it was a drugs deal.

Sunny Dhatt's fingerprint was on a shoe box that held the 9mm semi-automatic replica Glock handguns and a dozen bullets, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard. The box was found in the footwell of a VW Sharan driven by Sadaquat Ali, after the vehicle had been surrounded by armed police on the driveway of his home in Madeley Road, Dudley.

Four minutes earlier he had left the Spa supermarket car park in Lawnswood Road, Kingswinford, after undercover officers watched him collect something from a silver Seat with Jermal Simpson at the wheel on August 3 last year, said Mr Martyn Bowyer, prosecuting.

Ali has pleaded guilty to acquiring or purchasing the guns and ammunition, the jury heard. The prosecutor alleged that 26-year-old Dhatt and Khalad Uddin, aged 35, had organised the transfer of the weapons.

The Seat was stopped by armed police in Moss Grove, Kingswinford, and almost £2,000 cash was discovered hidden under a seat. Dhatt insisted he knew nothing about the guns and ammunition. He said he was friends with Simpson and they had been to the car park of a nearby Sainsbury's supermarket the previous day to collect cocaine, worth up to £13,000.

He claimed Uddin told him where to pick up the stash, which allegedly turned out to be sub standard and was to be returned to Uddin after Dhatt transferred it into the Adidas shoe box, the court heard.

Phones

There were 36 contacts between the mobile phones of the duo on the day of the alleged weapons transfer as well as contacts between Dhatt and Simpson and Uddin and Ali.

Mr Bowyer concluded: "Simpson was the delivery boy and Ali had been the collector with the strings being pulled from a safe distance by their puppet masters, Uddin and Dhatt."

Uddin was arrested at his home on October 19, while Dhatt was detained at a BMW dealership in Enfield.

Dhatt of no fixed address, Uddin from Scholars Mews, Oxford, and Simpson, 24, of Parker Street, Bloxwich, all deny conspiring to sell or transfer prohibited firearms and ammunition. Simpson further pleads not guilty to selling or transferring two 9mm handguns and ammunition on August 3.

Free course at library for parents-to-be

PARENTS-TO-BE to be can take advantage of a free four week pre-natal course at Dudley Library. It starts on May 12 and runs each Friday from 10.30am until 2.30pm until June 2. To book a place, call Jackie on (01384) 813041 or Donna on (01384) 812933.

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Misleading a customer costs dealer over £2,600

A CAR dealer has been ordered to pay £2,665 by a court after making false claims about a car sold to a Dudley resident.

Alan Quinn admitted misleading a buyer about the mileage of a Renault Scenic, which was advertised as having clocked up 90,000 miles. It later transpired the vehicle had actually travelled in excess of 140,000 miles.

Dudley Magistrates Court heard the advert placed by Quinn also failed to say the odometer – which measures the distance travelled by a car – had been replaced in the vehicle.

The buyer contacted Dudley Council's trading standards team after the defendant ignored complaints.

Quinn, of Moat Gardens, Sapcote, Leicestershire, failed to attend court for the initial hearing in September 2015 and a warrant was issued for his arrest.

The 53-year-old was finally brought to court last week under warrant, where he pleaded guilty to one offence on April 24 under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations and was fined £650.

He was also ordered to pay costs of £1,500, compensation of £500 to the consumer and a £65 victim surcharge.

Tony Oakman, strategic director, said: "Trading standards officers investigate complaints where second hand vehicles are not described fully or accurately. We will not hesitate to take action against traders who make misleading actions or omissions which deceive the customer and may put their safety at risk."

Lorra singers have a go for Cilla role

HUNDREDS of people are expected to turn out to auditions to find the West Midlands' next singing star for a lead role in a stage musical later this year.

Cilla The Musical will be staged at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre in October and auditions are now open for the role of Cilla Black, the Liverpudlian singer who went on to become a Saturday night TV star.

Auditions take place on Tuesday, May 9, from 9am at the city centre theatre with hundreds of applicants already registered to attend and many more expected at the open auditions on the day. Bill Kenwright and Laurie Mansfield present the new musical about the life of Cilla October 10-14. See cillathemusical.com website.

View from above at society meeting

SEDGLEY Local History Society meets on May 11 for a presentation on The Black Country from the Air. Speaker Keith Hodgkins is President of the Black Country Society. £1 admission at St Andrew's Church.

Kitchen gutted at shift worker's home

The gutted kitchen at a Stourbridge home

A HOUSE was wrecked in a blaze and the occupant taken to hospital after he fell asleep while cooking a meal.

The 52-year-old is believed to have just finished a night shift and been preparing breakfast when the fire started around 10.30am on Saturday.

Neighbours in Hawbush Road, Stourbridge, raised the alarm as smoke billowed from the kitchen.

Watch Commander Matt Young from Stourbridge fire station who attended with colleagues from Brierley Hill, said: "He had put some food on the stove and gone upstairs where he fell asleep. He had just come off a night shift and was very tired.

"He woke to find the kitchen on fire and tried to tackle it himself until he was overcome by the smoke.

"He managed to get outside and we gave him some oxygen until the paramedics took over. He was then taken to hospital for a check up.

Mr Young continued: "It appears that the smoke alarm might not have worked properly. If he had been alerted earlier then the house would not have suffered considerably less damage."

The blaze gutted the kitchen and caused serious smoke damage to the two-bedroom end-of-terrace property where the man lived alone.

Fire crews said they would 'discourage' him from continuing to live at the address until it had been repaired and were prepared to offer advice on alternative accommodation.

They were planning to check other homes in the area were fitted with working smoke alarms. Mr Young added: "It is impossible to overstate the importance of this. We will fit one free of charge if necessary."

Recycling bins being scrapped due to misuse

RECYCLING points across Dudley borough are to be scrapped.

The bins allow residents to drop off any extra recyclable rubbish including glass, textiles, cardboard, paper, card, plastic, cans and cartons.

But bosses have decided to remove them because they are being abused and people are fly-tipping around the bins.

Getting rid of the 12 banks will also save the cash-strapped council £45,000.

Opposition councillor Patrick Harley has slammed the decision and blamed the council for not emptying the bins often enough.

He said: "If the council emptied the bins more frequently they wouldn't be full. Obviously they're overused. If people are dumping their stuff at the side of the bins it's because they can't get it in the recycle containers.

"The service is a really popular measure and it shouldn't be taken away because it'll result in even more fly-tipping in the countryside."

The bins were rolled out across the borough around 15 years ago and proved successful.

However, a council document states that the system is 'not cost effective' and recorded tonnage from the sites during the first six months of 2016/17 was little more than 365 ton, equalling just four per cent of the overall dry recycling collected by the council.

Kerbside

Councillor Hilary Bills, cabinet member for environmental services, said previous recycling points had also been removed due to fly tipping.

She said: "Everyone has recycling now through the kerbside bags so we're finding the bins are being abused more by businesses and some people were even coming from outside the borough to drop things off.

"When the recycling bank is full people are fly-tipping around them so we had to give it a rethink. The system has been abused."

The recycling sites are on Flood Street and Stafford Street in Dudley, Castle Street in Coseley, Wordsley Green in Wordsley, Manor Park and Morrison's on Stallings Lane in Kingswinford, Birmingham Street in Halesowen, Toys Lane in Colley Gate, Church Street in Stourbridge, Asda on Pearson Street in Brierley Hill, the BP petrol station in Upper Gornal and Mary Stevens Park in Stourbridge.

The recycling point on Stafford Street has been closed and the others will close from June 1.

Dan's trek is Way to aid funding

Dan Meet planning his route for his trek from Bath to Cheltenham along an ancient route

A KEEN hiker is preparing to take on his latest challenge – to walk the length of the Cotswold Way in one day.

Dan Hall, from Stourbridge, plans to trek the full 65-mile route in the summer and has set himself a target of finishing in under 24 hours.

This will raise money for a charity close to his heart – the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust.

The animal lover took a substantial cut in salary some years ago to take a job with the West Midland Safari Park at Bewdley. It was there he first came into contact with the trust and its work.

He said: "They came to the safari park to carry out a breeding and conservation project involving adders, and it was something I'd independently looked at in Kinver where a number of adders can be found.

"There were other projects I'd been interested in setting up at the safari park but couldn't do so through lack of funding, so I'm very keen to raise money for this very worthy cause."

It is the latest in a long line of fundraising activities taken on by the 38-year-old, who now works as a logistics manager for a firm in Birmingham.

His Cotswold venture takes place on the first weekend in July.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Helpers needed to spruce up park

AN appeal has been launched for extra volunteers to lend at hand at a Stourbridge park.

Litter-pickers, gardeners and maintenance workers are all needed at Mary Stevens Park, which recently had a £2.6 million revamp.

Other voluntary roles such as supporting the history group, wildlife monitoring and collecting data are also available. The park's gardening group, which meets every Friday at 11am, is also recruiting. Contact senior park ranger Deborah Merrick on (01384) 815279.

Beauty spot is hit by woodland blaze

A FIRE broke out in woodland at Kinver Edge last Wednesday.

The blaze near Nanny's Rock, Sandy Lane, near Kinver, measured around 100 metres square.

Fire crews were called at 5.30pm on April 26 and found that bracken and woodland alight. They remained on the scene until about 10pm.

The cause of the fire was unknown.

Tim Hollingworth, station manager, said: "This fire put a significant drain on our resources."

Fire crews worked with National Trust rangers.

Wire company at German trade fair

A LEADING UK manufacturer based in Brierley Hill has recorded a 50 per cent growth in sales for its resistance wire.

Alloy Wire International, which was formed in 1946, is looking to build on this recent success by taking a sizeable presence at Interpack in Dusseldorf this week, believed to be one of the largest packaging exhibitions in the world. The company, based at Hurst Business Park, is targeting customers involved in the food industry.

School closes over a lack of heating

A SPECIALIST school in Dudley had to close to students because it had no heating.

Sutton School, in Scotts Green Close, took the decision to close in the interests of pupils. The school caters for pupils aged from 11-16 whose educational needs can not adequately be met in mainstream schools.

Daryl Charles, head teacher, said: "We are having some important improvement work done to our heating system."

Beer cheer for village

A TWO-DAY beer and cider festival is to be held in Kinver this week.

A dozen craft ale brewers will be featured at the Kinver Craft Beer and Cider Festival at Kinver Sports and Community Association tomorrow and Saturday. Admission is £2.50, which includes a festival glass.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Airport car park fees should not be sky high

ALONG with bogus charges for car hire, airport car parking charges are one of the great holiday rip-offs of modern times.

In a sensible world, there is no reason whatsoever why a multi-storey car park at an airport should cost more than in any major town or city. Logically, it ought to be less. After all, airports are large, spacious out-of-town sites, and nobody goes there for any reason other than to get a plane.

Yet, at Birmingham Airport for example, the official NCP car park charges £36 a day. For a two-week holiday, that could be more than the cost of the flight.

Little wonder then that people turn to the cheaper "valet parking" services, where a driver collects your car from the airport, parks it in a supposedly secure place for the duration of the trip, and then delivers it to you on your return.

But it now emerges that some of the operators have a slightly unusual definition of "secure parking". Lichfield couple David and Julia O'Neill returned from a fortnight in Vietnam to be hit with a parking ticket. It emerged that the valet parking operator, which charged them £100 for secure parking at Heathrow, had simply dumped their vehicle in a public car park, and not paid the correct fees. Worse still, an investigation revealed that hundreds of other cars had been left at public car parks, many with Heathrow barrier tickets on display, an open invitation to thieves who knew the owners were on holiday. Unbelievable.

■ ■ ■ ■

EDMUND King, the president of the AA, has come up with a novel idea to raise money for investment in Britain's overcrowded roads. Instead of screwing motorists for every last penny in road tax, fuel duty, and speeding fines, he suggests that business or even sports clubs could pay to have roads renamed after them. This has led to speculation that the M6 could be named after Manchester United. Not a bad idea, it is after all how most Manchester United fans get to Old Trafford. I think the M25 would probably be more appropriate, though.

■ ■ ■ ■

WHEN Jeremy Corbyn made his pre-election pledge of four extra bank holidays in honour of the UK's four patron saints, he no doubt thought it was a sure-fire winner. After all, who is going to object to some extra time off work, and what is there not to like about celebrating national unity?

Two problems. First of all, chances are that many employers will simply knock the extra four days off their workers' annual leave entitlement. Secondly, St David's Day is March 1, St Patrick's March 17, St George's April 23, and St David's November 30. So instead of being able to take time off at their own choosing, Mr Corbyn is telling people to take time off in winter. Good luck with that one.

Wiki co-founder hopes to ensure truth will out

Hand-clap – Kim Jong-Un, leader of North Korea, with his unique haircut

Hand-some – Thandie Newton as DCI Roz Huntley in In the Line of Duty

Handy – Wikipedia's Jimmy Wales, who is promising to eradicate the scourge of 'fake news'

Jimmy's mission and that's a fact

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

I SUGGESTED a few days ago that a Manx kipper probably has no tail. A reader says this shortcoming is more than made up for by its third leg.

JIMMY Wales, co-founder of Wikipedia, is planning a news service called Wikitribune to fight fake news. Wales says it will deliver "high-quality, fact-based information." Well, good luck with that. It's just that after nearly 50 years in this game, I have never actually encountered neutral news, nor met a single unbiased journalist. Every reporter, columnist, commentator and pundit believes he or she occupies the exact epicentre of the very centre ground of rational thought. And every reader or viewer is equally convinced that the most accurate, insightful and unbiased reports are the ones that exactly reflect their own views. One man's "high quality, fact-based information" is another man's fascist / commie propaganda. Indeed, the only truly rational, considered and unerringly accurate column is this one.

MIND you, no matter how much one strives for accuracy, there are always heffalump traps. In this election campaign it's the Farron / Fallon thing. Tim Farron is the Lib-Dem leader. Sir Michael Fallon is the defence secretary. Tim is an evangelical Christian who talks to God. Michael is a career Tory who talks to a vicar's daughter. Confusion, confusion.

OUR changing language. A reader tells me his local GP surgery has a sign warning about a hitch with the electronic log-in system: "Please do not use the Jayex machine to arrive your child for Baby Clinic." This reminds me that my annual blood-pressure appointment is approaching. Next month I must arrive myself at the clinic. I must also arrive a urine sample.

AFTER the trauma of her above-the-wrist amputation in Line of Duty (BBC1), didn't DCI Roz Huntley (Thandie Newton) seem remarkably casual about asking her husband for a divorce? Quite off-handed.

IT was Woody Allen who famously observed: "If you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans." A report from Iraq this week illustrates perfectly the sheer unpredictable, unfair cussedness of life. Three Islamic State fighters had apparently had enough of fighting and decided to surrender. Naturally, they left their weapons behind as they marched toward the enemy lines. On the way, unarmed and unawares, they were attacked and gored to death by wild boars.

YOU know what this general election campaign is missing? A new social group or two. In previous elections, the parties have identified and fought for the support of Worcester Woman and Mondeo Man. This time, who will be banging on doors to secure the votes of Seaside Strugglers, Lesbian Vapers and the Tring Transgenders?

AS attention turns once again to North Korea, the secretive state keeps its ultimate secret very secret indeed. The regime has murdered hundreds of Kim Jong-Un's ministers, officials and even relations. Yet his hairdresser survives. Bizarre.

SCIENTISTS at Cambridge believe a moth larva known as a wax worm may be able to rid the world of unwanted shopping bags thanks to its unique ability to digest plastic. I'm reminded of the 1970s BBC drama Doomwatch which began with an airliner crashing after all the plastic on board suddenly melted. It emerged that a plastic-eating virus had escaped from a rogue laboratory. Younger readers may rejoice at today's promise of plastic-eating moths. Older readers will recall the horror on the pilot's face in Doomwatch as his control stick turned to goo in his hands . . . .

MEANWHILE, ordinary moths are having a wonderful time thanks to the withdrawal, on safety grounds, of old-fashioned mothballs. My pure Merino sweater has emerged from the drawer looking like a string vest. A very expensive string vest.

BEAVERS, lynxes, wolves, elk? As the debate rages over whether to reintroduce big mammals into the British countryside, a friend is in despair. His small but perfectly trimmed lawn is his pride and joy, yet every night it is being ripped up and left horribly pot-holed. He would happily see the reintroduction of any animals – so long as they eat badgers.

THE online version of this column recently showed a car towing a caravan with the headline "What about the other mental conditions?" This was an unfortunate juxtaposition. I was not implying that caravanning is a psychological problem, or that there's anything bizarre about dragging your dirty crockery, unwashed clothes and half-full chemical toilets around the country while creating long traffic jams. Perfectly rational behaviour.

WHILE it may be magnanimous to guarantee EU workers the right to remain in the UK for all time, how does Labour's Brexit policy serve the interests of the Great British Public? 'Labour – Putting Foreigners First' is a bold campaign slogan but who's going to vote for it?

TALKING POINT

Now that's what I call a waste of money

WE'VE all seen the ads for them. Most have probably even got one. You've guessed it . . compilation albums.

No, not a selection of a band's greatest hits, or a film or TV soundtrack.

I can even stomach the latest chart tunes from Now whatever number it is up to these days.

No, I refer to the pointless and completely random ones rolled out at those special times of the year, Mother's Day, Valentine's, Father's Day, for example. You know the sort I mean . . .

I can picture the advert now. "Treat your dad to The Best Stuck in Congestion on the M25 on a Friday Night Rush Hour Album in the World . . . Ever!, featuring the likes of Baby You Can Drive My Car, Slow Down, Stuck in the Middle With You, Roadblock and other such classics."

They are billed as the ideal gift for whatever occasion it is, featuring all your mum's/dad's/girlfriend's/boyfriend's/whoever-it-may be's favourites.

Really? How can whoever came up with the tracklist possibly know that?

Sure, like all such albums there may be one or two good ones on there. But how could anyone compiling the list know what I would want to listen to?

The only people I would assume benefit from this commercial enterprise are the artists, raking in their royalties, and the manufacturers.

Even the 'Now' franchise has surpassed itself with its latest offerings, Now That's What I Call A Song (?) – that's a matter of opinion – and Now That's What I Call Running. I've also seen advertised children's versions of current top tunes, Songs By Kids For Kids, apparently, and Sing Your Heart Out 2017. Exactly the pointless collections I'm talking about.

We all have CDs we like to listen to whenever the mood takes us, and it's nice to look back at ones bought by a loved one as a present. But, no offence, please do not spend your hard-earned on one of those No1 Songs For Hosting a Dinner Party or Barbecue compilations for me. Incidentally, the latter is probably the only album you will find Fire! and Smoke Gets In Your Eyes just thrown together).

However, if you happen to know the favourite song of my top 15 or 20 acts and put that together, you've got yourself a deal – Now That's What I'd Call The Ultimate Bespoke Party Album In My Collection Ever.

I don't need anyone to tell me, or at least try to guess, what I would like to listen while ironing or out jogging.

Christmas, however? That's a different matter. Classic tunes (with the odd exception, of course), and ideal for getting everyone in the festive spirit. And if you don't appreciate a bit of Nat King Cole maybe it's time to roast your old CDs on an open fire instead.

Mind you, October is too early to play festive tunes in the shops though.

MARK SHIPP

Home should be the number one priority

WHEN I see bereft parents on TV, small child playing with his toys just out of shot, telling us how disadvantaged he or she and their child happen to be and how they can't afford a mobile phone, a fifty foot wide TV or a holiday in Disneyland, I despair.

I've experienced not having a fixed abode and the anguish and insecurity that brings. You can get by without things that others may have, can feed your family without taking them to McDonald's and maintain your dignity – providing you have a roof over your head.

I remember at the age of seven and eight, because we did not have accommodation, I was shipped from nan to grandma to mum whilst dad lived elsewhere. I did not starve, even under rationing, and was washed and dressed.

I had little idea of the real trauma my parents were undergoing and it was only in later life I was told that they had deliberately kept this from me. The only time I saw the veil lifted was, on one of the occasions we were kicked out of where we were renting, seeing my pregnant mother in tears sitting on a chair in the street. Because of my experiences as a kid, when I became engaged I made it a priority above all else that we got together enough cash for a deposit on a home.

The present furore about lack of affordable housing and each party blaming the other for not building enough is a red herring. What I blame both parties for is not the failure to build homes, it is watching from the sidelines and not intervening as the population soars and knowing that the goal posts will continue to be moved.

ALAN M ETHERIDGE
Dudley

Burning wood not 'greener'

THERE was an announcement on April 22 that, for the first time since the start of the Industrial Revolution, this country had gone a whole 24-hour period without using coal to fuel our generators.

Those making this announcement made a big deal of this, saying we're becoming 'greener' by doing this.

We all must be concerned about the tons of carbon dioxide and other noxious gases being put out by the old coal burning power stations so must be pleased about this fact. But we don't have sufficient capacity in electricity production from solar or wind power, along with our ageing nuclear power stations, to meet our needs on a permanent basis.

More importantly, we have converted some coal burning power stations to burn wood. When burning wood more noxious products enter the atmosphere than when we burn coal!

M GOUGH
Wombourne

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL
dudley.chrons@expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Code of Practice: Our policy is to correct errors as soon as we can. The Chronicles adhere to the Editors' Code of Practice, which can be seen at

Conifer wood may be cause of smoking chimney problems

SEVERAL weeks ago, you reported that Dudley Council were threatening to sue people who had smoking chimneys.

A bit late I know, but had anyone bothered to notify people who had installed wood burning stoves that they were asking for trouble if they tried burning conifer tree wood?

Lots of people had conifer hedging which they have had cut down, and possibly tried burning the wood indoors.

When we had our hedge cut down, we were told not to try burning it indoors as the tar content in the wood could block the chimney.

PETER COLE
Kingswinford

Good news week for hedgehogs

WE are writing to let your readers know that it's Hedgehog Awareness Week this week!

We organise Hedgehog Awareness Week to highlight the problems hedgehogs face and how to help them. Lots of tips to make sure our prickly friends stay safe can be found on our website at www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk

Efforts are focussed on our 'Hedgehog Heroes' campaign. We are asking councils, tool hire companies, etc, to place waterproof stickers onto their cutting machines that remind operatives to check for hedgehogs before starting work.

We are providing the stickers free of charge and adding those sending photographs of the stickers 'in action' to the Hedgehog Heroes Roll of Honour on the website!

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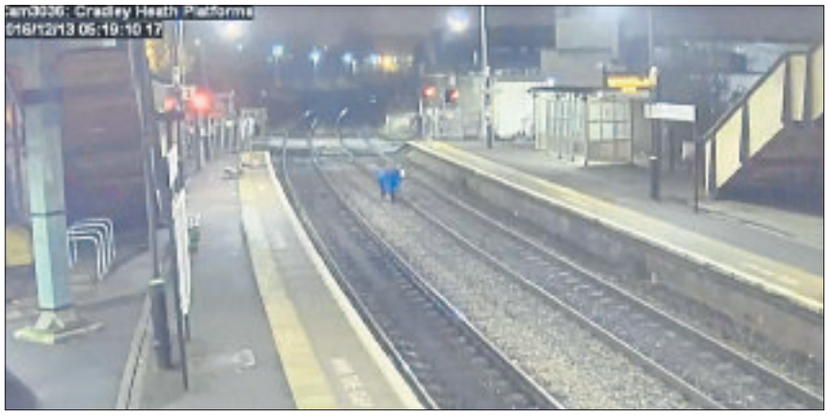

Tresspasser filmed on the railway tracks in Cradley Heath

IT is 5.20am – a man lumbers on to the platform at a Black Country railway station. He steps down on to the tracks, appearing to search for something before the lights of a train appear round the corner.

Just in time, the man leaps and rolls on to the platform at he Cradley Heath Station. This CCTV footage, captured in a screen grab, shows one of 588 trespass incidents in the West Midlands last year. The video released by the British Transport Police was taken on December 13 from the Cradley Heath stop, on the line between Stourbridge and Birmingham Moor Street.

It has has been released as part of a campaign to raise awareness as more people than ever in the West Midlands are endangering their lives.

Hospice festival fever

MARY Stevens Hospice staff have been 'overwhelmed' by the response they've had to a new event at Himley Hall this summer.

Summerfest will bring a festival atmosphere to Himley Hall, with a full day of live music, food festival and classic car show.

The car show will see more than 100 cars from across the last 100 years.

There will also be fairground rides, donkeys and a host of other events. Since being launched at the turn of the year, the hospice has seen ticket sales surge online and the event has been engaged with by nearly 2,000 people on Facebook.

Laura Millard, community engagement officer at Mary Stevens Hospice Group, said: "There's always an element of waiting on baited breath when you launch a new event, and you just hope that what you've created is what the community want to be a part of.

"However, as soon as we started telling people about Summerfest, the interest has just gone through the roof and we're now in a position that we've got a huge waiting list for bands and caterers who want to support the day and we simply can't fit them in because of the demand.

"It's going to be a fantastic community day out and we'd love to see local families there with big smiles on their faces, just enjoying a really good festival."

Entry is free for under twos, £4 under16s and £8 adults, with family tickets , two adults and two under-16s, available for £20.

To book tickets visit the website at marystevenshospice.co.uk/event/summerfest The event has been sponsored by Western Power,

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Historic Wolves cup winner's medal to go under hammer

The 1908 Wolves squad that won the FA cup, Billy Wooldridge is second row, fourth from left

The rear of Billy's 1908 FA Cup final medal

A postcard of the victorious 1908 Wolves team featuring captain Billy Wooldridge

A RARE piece of Wolves' history from the club's 1908 FA Cup final win is being sold at auction.

MEMORY LANE

By Robert Cox

The 15 carat gold winner's medal was presented to Billy Wooldridge, the then Wolves' captain, following the 3-1 victory over Newcastle United.

More than a century later it is expected to fetch between £6,000 and £8,000 when it goes under the hammer next month.

The victory was the club's second in the FA Cup and came 46 years before Wolves were first crowned First Division champions. The medal is in a good condition and an engraving on the back features the skipper's name. It currently belongs to Shirley Burn, from Lichfield, who said she bought it from Wooldridge's grandson in 1979.

"My late husband and I had a shop in Birmingham and one day Billy Wooldridge's grandson came and said 'do you want it, I have decided to sell it,'" she explained.

"It was quite sad really. My late husband was a lifelong fan and he tried to talk the guy out of it. He told him it was such an important piece of history. But the man would not be convinced and we bought it off him." After Mrs Burn's late husband died in 1994 she loaned it to Wolves and for 21 years it held pride of place in the club's museum. But now the 57-year-old has decided to sell the medal, which comes complete with its original box.

Billy Wooldridge was born in Netherton in 1878 and went on to make 356 appearances for Wolves, scoring 90 goals in 12 years at Molineux.

An entry in 'The Wolves' encyclopaedia published in 1989, reads: "Billy was a wonderful servant to Wolves – a player who was never flurried, never overawed, and one who never gave less than 100 per cent effort out on the park, whether performing in defence or attack. He played centre-half between Hunt and Bishop in the 1908 FA Cup Final, skippering Wolves to a memorable victory. With his thick black moustache, 'Wooly' was a commanding figure in the team."

When Wolves won the FA Cup in 1908 there were only two divisions in English football, each with 20 teams. Cup favourites Newcastle finished fourth in the first division and Wolves finished ninth in division two.

The club had first lifted the trophy in 1893 and have won the competition on a total of four occasions with further success in 1949 and 1960.

Billy Wooldridge's winner's medal will go under the hammer through Graham Budd Auctions at Sotheby's in London on May 16. Mr Budd, said: "It is a very rare medal and hopefully it will make a good price."

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This dog loves life in the fast lane

Owner Keiran Samra with Titan, the wandering dog who brought the M5 in the Black Country to a standstill

HE is the adventurous dog who brought the M5 in the Black Country to a standstill.

Titan, the four-year-old Akita escaped from a garden in West Bromwich High Street and made a beeline straight for the motorway.

He trotted onto the M5 at Junction 1 in West Bromwich on Thursday morning, leading emergency services to close both carriageways while they tried to collar him.

Traffic remained stationary for around an hour while people tried to detain Titan, whose owner Keiran Samra lives just a couple of hundred yards from the M5.

He was eventually caught, leaving bemused drivers to continue on their way and his owner Mr Samra embarrassed.

The 22-year-old told the Express & Star: "When Titan got back he was panting away – he was worn out. He loves running about and he's actually our second dog who has ended up on the motorway!

"At the time it was horrible but now I'm laughing about it. I do feel a bit embarrassed because of the delays everyone faced and the trouble the police went through, but I'm glad he's safe."

It is the second time the pet has escaped from the family's garden in recent weeks.

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A top-class start for Tipton primary school

SCORES of pupils were welcomed into a brand new primary school in Tipton.

Sacred Heart Primary School, which has been built off Sedgley Road East in Tipton, saw almost 200 pupils arrive on Monday morning following the Easter break.

It replaced the former school on Victoria Road – which was too small. Now able to offer 420 primary places and 52 nursery places, the new build is expected to be full by 2022.

Council chiefs said the build came in a bid to meet the growing demand for school places in the borough.

Headteacher Melanie Gee said: "It's been amazing. The children started on Monday but we have been busy preparing for around three weeks now for the majority of the pupils to move in. The build process went smoothly and we feel really blessed that we were chosen for this fantastic opportunity.

"Before we had the smallest primary school in Sandwell and we were already outgrowing it anyway.

"Now walking around the new school it just makes you think how we ever managed before. It is great that the children can now have 21st century education."

While work was being carried out, children were taught at the Grade II-listed Carnegie Building in Victoria Road. She continued: "It's been a hard experience for me but a joy that it has come together so well now.

"We are growing from reception up each year and we can't wait to see what the future holds."

The school was designed and built by Sunesis – as a joint venture between Willmott Dixon and Scape Group

Head Teacher Mel Gee pictured with youngsters Mikaeel Tahir and Tasfia Ahmed, both aged seven

Man jailed over 33,000 images

A MAN 'obsessed' by young girls has been jailed for 18 months after he downloaded over 33,000 indecent photographs of children.

Steven Eaves, 42, from Pensnett, was also placed on the Sexual Offenders List for the next 10 years.

Judge Barry Berlin said it was clear Eaves, of Dreadnought Road, used the material which showed children as young as two being abused.

He said Eaves had been addicted to the images he downloaded adding, 'You have an unhealthy obsession with young girls'. The judge added: "These are utterly grave and disgusting images that fuel what is an utterly grave and disgusting industry."

Eaves admitted possessing the indecent images and another charge of voyeurism. He was also made the subject of an indefinite Sexual Harm Prevention Order by the judge at Wolverhampton Crown Court.

Miss Ruby Ghinday, defending, said Eaves had been unhappy with his life at the time of his offending which had started out as 'curiosity'. She said he wanted to put his life back in order.

Security call as former nightclub to re-open

BOSSES behind a new bar in the Black Country have been urged to ensure tight security – as the venue which used to occupy the premises became renowned for violence.

Bar Diva is set to take over the premises of the former Rock Zombie nightclub in King Street, Dudley, after the latter had its licence revoked last summer.

In an application submitted to Dudley Council licensing chiefs this week, officers recommend 'internal and external CCTV to be installed at the premises and to be recording at all times' to the 'specifications of the West Midlands Police'.

The Dudley premises

Businessman Christopher Marson is behind the new venture.

When plans for Bar Diva were revealed, he said: "We are currently trying to open a gay, non-attitude bar on the site of the old Rock Zombie club. I'm currently working with two investors and the club could look set to open on March 31."

That deadline has now passed but the venue's licensing hearing was set to take place last Tuesday.

Breathalysers

Rock Zombie was shut down following a series of violent incidents, including a Christmas Day machete attack in 2015. Police are now keen to ensure there is not a repeat of the violence at the new bar.

Conditions which have been suggested were set out in a council document ahead of the meeting. It stated: "Registered door staff, including one female member of door staff shall be provided on those days when recorded or live music is being provided as entertainment, between opening and the end of licensed hours. All door staff must be clearly identifiable as door staff, with a Security Industry Authority (SIA) number.

"The premises shall maintain a record of full details of all door staff on duty at the premises, including SIA number and the signature of door staff upon start and finish of duty, countersigned by the Designated Premises Supervisor. All customers entering the premises when door staff are in place shall be subject to a bag and body search. Strictly no entry to the premises at any time to anyone under the age of 18 years old.

"Internal and external CCTV to be installed at the premises and recording at all times when the premises are open for licensable activity, to the specifications of the West Midlands Police.

"All images are to be recorded and retained for a minimum of 28 days and made available to any responsible authority upon request. A last entry policy of midnight into the premises. The use of breathalysers if a customer appears intoxicated."

The licensee wants recorded music from 9am until 3am, on Mondays and Thursday to Saturday, and until 2am on Sundays.

Finally, the licensee is requesting alcohol to be sold from 9am until 2am on Mondays and from Thursday to Saturday, and from 9am until 1.30am on Sundays.

Comic Noble in Brum

COMEDIAN Ross Noble will play Birmingham later this month. He will play at Just The Tonic at The Comedy Loft in Broad Street on May 19.

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A night of hilarity, all in the name of charity

COMEDIANS Tim Key, Suzi Ruffell and Matt Forde are heading to Wolverhampton for its Hilarity Charity Gala.

They will join Romesh Ranganathan, Josh Widdicombe and compere Daniel Kitson for the Central Youth Theatre fundraiser.

The acts will take the Grand Theatre stage in Lichfield Street on May 18. Kitson is hosting for the fourth time, while Widdicombe will be making his second appearance at the gala. Previous acts to perform at the annual show include Jon Richardson, Russell Howard, Greg Davies and Rob Beckett.

New names were announced last week. Tim Key has won the Edinburgh Comedy Award and has featured in TV shows including Plebs, Taskmaster and Peep Show as well as starring in the Alan Partridge Film Alpha Papa. He also starred in E4's comedy series Gap Year. In 2007 a short film of his won best UK Short at the Edinburgh Film Festival and was nominated for a BAFTA for Best Short Film.

Romesh Ranganathan is on the bill

Second gala for Josh Widdombe

Edinburgh award-winning Tim Key

In demand comic Suzi Ruffell

Circuit

Regarded as one of best up and coming acts on the circuit Suzi Ruffell is in constant demand. Fast establishing herself on the live circuit supporting Alan Carr, Widdicombe and Kevin Bridges, she then went onto have a sell-out double header tour with Ranganathan in the spring of 2015.

Her TV appearances include E4's Virtually Famous and two series of Comedy Central's The Comedy Store.

She has also written additional material for TV shows such as The Last Leg, Mock The Week and 8 Out Of 10 Cats. This year sees Suzi return to the Edinburgh Festival with her new show Common before heading out on tour with it this autumn.

Matt Forde, meanwhile, writes for shows including 8 out of 10 cats and Russell Howard's Good News and hosts his own overnight show on Talk Sport as well as reviewing the papers on Sky News.

He currently hosts the show The Political Party and last year he hosted a weekly topical political show Unspun with Matt Forde on Dave.

Jane Ward MBE, director of CYT said: "We would not have been able to continue our work without holding the Hilarity Gala every year. It's one not to miss."

For tickets, visit www.grandtheatre.co.uk/whats-on/comedy/the-hilarity-charity-gala or call 01902 429212.

Students hit heights with Everest challenge

STUDENTS and teachers from a Black Country school have gone on an expedition to Everest base camp in Nepal to support the communities left devastated after the 2015 earthquake.

A total of seven students and two teachers from Walsall Academy, based on Lichfield Road in Bloxwich, Walsall, made the trip, and the school believes it is the first ever British state school to undertake an expedition to the base camp.

The students spent 21 days in total trekking to base camp at 5,436 metres – a total of 91 miles.

During their trek they visited the altitude medication centre at Periche and spent time with the Ghurka Everest 2017 team who played a pivotal role in the rescue and aid efforts to the Khumbu and Langtang regions in 2015 after the earthquake.

Walsall Academy trek to the Everest base camp

The team of intrepid explorers pose for the camera

Devastated

The final few days for the expedition were spent in Kathmandu visiting the Dhurba Square – a UNESCO World Heritage Site which was devastated by the earthquake and is now the focus of a restoration project which will take many years using earthquake proof technologies.

Student Isaac Marlow, who at 15 was one of the youngest members on last month's expedition, said: "After many months of planning and fundraising it was a relief to set foot in Kathmandu but I had no idea of the challenges that awaited the team.

"The trek up to base camp is not easy and it was only with the help of our Sherpa guides that we managed to all achieve our goal. I learnt so much about the people of Nepal and the recent challenges that they faced but I also learnt a great deal about myself and what I am capable of.

"Altitude made the last few miles to base camp a massive hurdle but as we approached Paul Oakenfold, DJ, was on the decks completing the World's Highest ever rave and we danced and cheered, it is a moment and feeling that I will never forget."

Jon Clarke, the shadow headteacher at Walsall Academy, added: "It is a massive achievement for anyone to reach Everest base camp but especially a group of young people from Bloxwich. This group is a role model for others and clearly demonstrate that the youth of today have the skills needed to complete and succeed in huge challenges."

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Walsall's Manager Jon Whitney tees off during the contest

Stan Petrov and John Hartson joke around

First team players get set for the day to raise money for charity

Chris Nicholls and Martin O'Connor at Walsall Golf Club

Former Walsall winger John Hodge

Current Saddlers midfielder, Kieron Morris, tries his luck on the putting green

Saddlers chip in for charity

WALSALL stars past and present took to the fairways to raise funds for leading cancer charity, The John Hartson Foundation.

Former Baggies striker Hartson was diagnosed with testicular cancer back in 2009 with the disease going on to spread to his lungs and brain.

But the Welshman defied the odds to beat the condition and has since raised more than £700,000 to help men who find themselves in a similar position.

Last Wednesday he was joined by a host of Saddlers stars including boss Jon Whitney and players Jason McCarthy, Scott Laird, George Dobson, Liam Kinsella and Eoghan O'Connell at a fundraiser at Walsall Golf Club. Former players Michael Ricketts and Martin O'Connor also attended as well as ex-managers Kenny Hibbitt and Kenny Mower.

"It's great to be able to raise awareness of John's charity," Whitney said.

"There has been a really good turnout. We've got players from the first-team squad. Ian Sharps (coach) is playing but Neil Cutler bottled it.

Commercial

"It's a great cause and something we really need to highlight and it's fantastic to see John and Stan Petrov because they have both done so much for charity."

Former Walsall midfielder Wayne Thomas – who is now commercial manager at the Banks's Stadium – said he hopes the golf day will become an annual event.

"It was our inaugural golf day and hopefully it was the first of many," he said.

"When I was a player we had a great golf day and it was something that when I came back I wanted to get going again.

"Teams play with a current player or manager. We had 18 ex or current players plus John Hartson and Stan Petrov.

"The players have been been fully supportive of it.

"And you can't underestimate how much the commercial partners and fans are looking forward to having three or four hours with a player.

"Walsall Football Club has a great relationship with Walsall Golf Club because we sponsor the disabled golf events they run – so it was great to hold this there as well."

Mayor's civic fundraising with walking football

THE Mayor of Dudley is inviting people to join him at a charity walking football tournament in Halesowen later this month.

Councillor Mohammed Hanif is organising a six-a-side tournament of the more leisurely form of the game at Powerleague on Friday, May 19, and is inviting people to enter teams. It will be the final fundraising event of his year in office.

Starting at 6pm, it costs £5 per player to take part, with spectators also invited to make a £1 donation.

All monies raised on the night will go the mayor's three chosen charities for his year in office. They are Dudley CIL, The Friends of Alfie Johnson and the Dudley branch of Diabetes UK.

Walking football is, in essence, football without running. It was invented to inspire men over 50 to get more exercise and counter social isolation and has seen a massive upsurge in popularity, with more than 800 registered clubs by the end of last year.

Councillor Mohammed Hanif said: "Walking football has become massively popular in this country as an effective way of exercising while still enjoying playing the game we all love.

"I would urge people to sign up and support the event, and may the best team win."

To enter a team or for further details about the event, call or text 07703308463 or email Cllr.Mohammed.Hanif@dudleymbc.org.uk

Event to showcase anatomy at college

A UNIQUE live experience will offer pupils from across Walsall an in-depth understanding of the human anatomy and physiology.

Anatomy Lab LIVE is a popular touring anatomy event which showcases how the human body works through an interactive live event. The latest tour will stop at Walsall College on May 10 and 11 from 6-10pm.

Tickets are priced at £40.

For more information or to book tickets visit www.thevivitexperience.co.uk/upcomingevents

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Misprint on card is such folly

Kingswinford TG

KATH Turner provided flowers for the April 10 meeting at Kingswinford Community Centre, which she generously donated as an extra raffle prize.

Chairman Enid Fennell introduced newest member June Bradley. The necessary business was soon completed and the new committee member Pauline Bird was introduced as vice chairman.

The chairman introduced Roy Peacock as the speaker. Everyone was eagerly awaiting his address, described on the membership cards as 'The Local history of The Follies' and had been speculating on the precise nature of the talk.

Follies, as in Folies Bergere? Would we see our ancestors dancing The Can-Can? Would we be asked to try dancing it? Was it a case of local buildings erected to provide work for the local unemployed, or possibly weird and wonderful actions taken by locals who had had surprisingly odd results?

Rather sadly the reality was much simpler. The persons printing the cards have either auto correct or predictive texting on their computer and the word printed as follies should have been Foley's, which meant a history of the Foley family and which proved interesting and very informative.

Mr Peacock was thanked by Joyce Major. Enid Fennell, Chris Moy and June Bradley won the raffle prizes.The next meeting is on May 8 and is about Female Conscription in the Second World War.

Small change adds up to charity cash

Grange (E) Guild

CHAIRMAN Chris Holton presided over the April meeting at Grange Court, Stourbridge.

She reported that a coffee morning was held on March 24 at the home of committee member Sue Wilding. Refreshments were on offer with tea/coffee and an abundance of home made cakes and 40/50 people attended. There was a bring and buy sale and a raffle and it raised £322 for Comic Relief. The whole event was voted a huge success and was enjoyed by all who attended.

The copper/ small change collection is still going well and another cheque for £50 has been sent to Lye and Wollescote disabled group. A cheque has also been sent to the Stroke Association, this year's chosen charity.

David Berry gave an entertaining and light-hearted talk on A Day in Court.

Refreshments were then served by committee members and their helpers with hot cross buns as an Easter treat. The sales table also had an Easter theme. Several ladies won raffle prizes.

Entertaining talk from ex-Redcoat

Stourbridge Ladies

THIRTY eight members and visitors of the Stourbridge Ladies Society met on March 28 to hear Mr Paul McGuire's talk entitled 'I was a Butlin's Redcoat'.

Mr McGuire took members back to the 1950s when he became an entertainer at the Pwllheli holiday camp in Wales.

He was given two of the famous red blazers but had to buy the rest of the uniform, which was white and had to be pristine at all times.

His duties included meeting the trains, helping the holidaymakers settle in to their chalets, as well as being part of the entertainment team. He revealed that he had worked with many well-known comedians who were starting out on their careers. After leaving Butlin's he worked for the BBC as a warm-up man at live televised performances.

Following his talk, Mr McGuire drew the raffle and he was thanked for giving such a lively and amusing talk.

Stourbridge Ladies Society has met in the church hall for the last 40 years, but are now moving to the Amblecote Room in Stourbridge Town Hall.

The meetings will continue to be on the fourth Tuesday of each month, starting at 2pm. All are welcome.

The group meets for interesting talks, outings and friendship.

For further information phone Mrs Hall on 01384 288841.

Summer of rock for new season

The Festival Community Choir

THE Festival Community Choir celebrated the end of its second season by giving two sell-out concerts at The Beacon Centre for the Blind, Sedgley.

This 'sing for fun' choir sang a varied repertoire of songs from Sweet Charity, Chicago, Sister Act, Carly Simon and others. Choir members also donated cakes and scones for sale. Proceeds from the cake sale and ticket money came to just over £1,000 and were donated to The Macmillan Cancer Research Fund. All leftover cakes were donated to a Wolverhampton Homeless Centre. The choir's aim for next season is to take its membership up from 50 to 100.

The next season which begins on April 24 is Summer of Rock. The group practises at the Beacon Centre for the Blind on Mondays at 7.30pm. Contact www.festivalchoir.co.uk

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Public meeting for rail users

A RAIL user group will host rail industry representatives at its public meeting in Kidderminster.

The Stourbridge Line User Group focuses on the Worcester-Kidderminster-Stourbridge-Birmingham line. Anyone can attend to ask questions about plans for train services.

"This year's event comes at an exciting time for the local rail service," said William Whiting, acting chair of the Stourbridge Line User Group. "The new West Midlands rail franchise will be announced a month or two after the meeting and we will hear from West Midlands Rail, which will be leading the management of local rail services in the whole region.

The public meeting is at 7.30pm on Tuesday, May 9, at the King & Castle bar in the Severn Valley Railway's Kidderminster Town station. Visit www.stourbridgelineusergroup.info

Diesel delight on SVR heritage line

DETAILS for the Severn Valley Railway's Spring Diesel Festival have been announced.

The event will host heritage and modern diesel locomotives from May 18 to 20. It will mark the 30th anniversary of the first SVR Diesel Gala.

Lewis Maddox, SVR event co-ordinator, said: "This special, 30th anniversary Diesel Festival promises to be a must-see event for the diesel fan."

For more information, visit www.svr.co.uk website.

Homes on school site

A FORMER school in Halesowen has been bulldozed to make way for some 30 homes.

Holt Road Primary School had been empty for almost 10 years before it was sold for housing last year. Building work has now begun on the site, which sold for £1.35 million.

Stars are pitching in for charity as teams line up

Shayne Ward, who is a team manager

Blue singer Lee Ryan

Reality star Calum Best

Footballer Wayne Bridge

Boxing's Joe Calzaghe

Footballer Jamie O'Hara

Actor Jake Wood

Katie Price, signed up as a boss too

WITH the celebrity list growing longer and longer, tickets for a charity football match at Banks's Stadium are rapidly being snapped up.

The star-studded event is raising money for the Smile for Joel and Compton Hospice charities with Katie Price and singer Shayne Ward signed up to manage the two celebrity teams.

Taking place at the Walsall FC ground on May 13, tickets initially went on sale for the HomeServe stand only but demand was so great they also opened up the lower tier of the Tile Choice stand. And many of the blocks in this tier are now sold out too.

The Smile for Joel charity was set up in memory of tragic Saddlers fans Joel Richards, Patrick Evans and Adrian Evans from the Black Country who were shot dead in the Tunisia beach terror attack. Nineteen-year-old Joel's mother Suzi and brother Owen, who survived the attack when he was only 16, formed the charity which raises money to support families who are victims of traumatic bereavement.

The list of celebrities confirmed so far include members of boy band Blue Lee Ryan Simon Webbe and Antony Costa, along with Steps singer Lee Latchford-Evans. Meanwhile, there are X Factor stars Stevi Ritchie and Che Chesterman, plus 911 star Jimmy Constable and MC Harvey from So Solid Crew.

Footballer

Actors include Jake Wood (Max Branning in EastEnders); Oliver Phelps (George Weasley in Harry Potter); along with other EastEnders actors Dean Gaffney, Matt Lapinskas, Tony Discipline and Jamie Borthwick.

From the world of sport are ex-footballer Wayne Bridge, boxers Martin Gethin and Joe Calzaghe; Frankie Gavin and Pete McDonagh; and Jamie O'Hara (former Wolves footballer).

A number of TV presenters are confirmed including Jeff Brazier; Rocket and Adam Smith (Soccer AM) and Gavin Ramjaun.

But stars of reality TV are turning out in force, with such names as Calum Best (Celebrity Big Brother); Nev Wilshire (Call Centre); Max Morley (Love Island Winner); Austin Armacost (Celebrity Big Brother); Liam Gatsby (The Only Way is Essex) and fellow TOWIE star James 'Arg' Argent. Tickets are £10 adults and £5 juniors from the stadium ticket office on 01922 651 416.

33 now face action over terror attack in Tunisia

THIRTY-THREE people are being prosecuted over the Tunisia hotel massacre which left 30 British holidaymakers – including three members of a Black Country family – dead, it has been reported.

Members of the security forces and hotel guards are believed to be among those charged with failing to help tourists.

A British judge has already condemned the police response to the deadly attack on the resort as 'at best shambolic, at worst cowardly' at the victims' inquests.

Suzy Richards, from Wednesbury, who lost her son, brother and father in the attack, said she had not been informed about the prosecutions.

Joel Richards, aged 19, his grandfather Patrick Evans, 78, and uncle Adrian Evans, 44, a Sandwell Council worker from Bilston, died as gunman Seifeddine Rezgui shot tourists at the Rui Imperial Marhaba Hotel in 2015.

Ms Richards' other son Owen, who was 16 at the time, survived the attack at the resort of Port El Kantaoui.

Sofiene Sliti, a spokesman for the Tunisian investigation, said: "The trial on the attack at the Imperial Marhaba Hotel will begin on May 26."

Failing

It had previously been revealed that six hotel security guards had been charged for failing to protect holidaymakers.

Ms Richards said: "I knew there had been several arrests but certainly not 33. It is very upsetting not to be kept in the loop. We have never been given an option to attend, it is something we would have to fund ourselves. There has been very little communication from Tunisia."

The inquests heard how police and tourist security 'deliberately and unjustifiably slowed their response' as holidaymakers fled for their lives.

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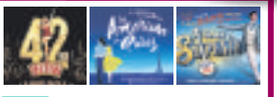

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Electric cars in showcase event

AN ENVIRONMENTAL group will be raising awareness of electric vehicles at an event on May 13.

It's been organised by Transition Kidderminster and is aimed at residents who own or drive an electric vehicle to showcase their vehicles and explain the advantages and challenges.

The event will run from 10am until noon at the Youth House car park, in Bromsgrove Street, Kidderminster.

Representatives from Worcestershire County Council will be attending to answer questions on public charging points.

Keith Budden, of Transition Kidderminster, said: "Electric vehicles are clean, green, fun and cheap to run. So far, we have local residents bringing a variety of different vehicles including a Nissan Leaf, Renault Zoe, BMW i3 and even a Tesla."

For more information email keithheath erbudden@hotmail.com

Nurseries located in above the limit pollution hot-spots

DOZENS of nurseries in the Black Country and Staffordshire are situated next to roads which have above-limit pollution levels, an investigation has found.

The West Midlands stands second in a list of the top 10 areas with the highest polluted roads in the UK.

Across the West Midlands, Birmingham is the highest affected area, with Sandwell and Wolverhampton behind.

Greenpeace measured how many nurseries were within 150 metres of roads which breach the legal limit for NO2 – nitrogen dioxide – the legal limit annually is 40mg.

Sandwell has 14 nurseries which are affected by pollution. The Branch nursery, Beeches Road, has the highest with 46.31 annual micrograms of NO2 per cubic metre. The Little Wendy House, Walsall Street, Wonderland Children's Nursery, Holyhead Road and Wesley Playcentre at the Wesley Centre were closely behind with 46.13mg.

The Branch,Wesley Playcentre and Wonderland Children's Nursery were unable to comment. However, a spokeswoman for Little Wendy House said: "I'd say that it doesn't really affect us in that way. We're lucky where we are because even though we are close to the main road, the nursery itself is set back from the road. It's in a protected area in a way because you've got the buildings and trees that surround us."

Other nurseries severely affected by pollution in the Black Country are Learning Journey's Daycare, Wolverton Road, Dudley, with 52.4mg and Stanley's Nursery, Birchills Street, Walsall, which was clocked at 47.34mg.

Stacey Hill, manager of Learning Journey's Daycare, said: "We are very concerned but it is down to the Government. There's nothing we can physically do to prevent it, we can't shelter the kids and put a cell around them, can we?"

In Wolverhampton, Little Scholars Day Nursery, Randall Lines House recorded the highest at 44.06mg, with Little Oaks, Stafford Road and TLC Neighbourhood Nursery, Dunstall Road closely behind with 43.93mg. A spokesperson for Little Oaks Nursery said: "We're quite far from the main road so it's not much of a problem."

Call to treat Hep C earlier

A STUDY of young people with childhood acquired hepatitis C, led by Birmingham Children's Hospital liver experts, has shown that serious long-term liver damage could be prevented through early use of antiviral therapy.

Hepatitis C affects over 185 million people worldwide and 215,000 in the UK. Around 350,000 die each year – 84,000 from Europe.

Dr Line Modin, of the Liver Unit at Birmingham Children's Hospital, said: "Detection of the virus should be aimed at relevant risk groups, particularly young intravenous drug abusers."

Cases in young people are mainly contracted from their mother at birth or via intravenous drug use. New drugs are 90 to 100 per cent successful in preventing serious liver disease, but are not yet available for children.

Monkeys mark Earth Day

This monkey has the world at his feet as Dudley Zoo celebrates Earth Day

DUDLEY Zoo's Colombian black spider monkeys helped staff raise awareness of Earth Day .

The annual international awareness day celebrates the planet and focuses on the environmental issues it faces, aiming to encourage people to be greener.

Recycling newspaper, lower primate keepers made papier mâché globes, which they filled with vegetable and seed treats for Valentine, Charlie, Chester and Evita to enjoy.

Senior keeper, Jodie Dryden, said: "To protect the Earth for generations to come, we need to take action now and even simple changes can make a huge difference.

"We thought the globe enrichment was a fun way to help spread the Earth Day message to visitors and our spider monkeys were certainly appreciative to get the treats."

"We placed the globes around their climbing frame and left them to discover their treats and they were ripping them open and using their prehensile tails to hang from the ropes to reach for the hanging globes, which is just as they should do."

One man's mission to get workers fitter

A UNIVERSITY researcher from Birmingham has ambitions to boost physical activity in the workplace.

PhD researcher Ayazullah Safi, of Birmingham City University's School of Health Sciences, is aiming to raise awareness of the importance exercise for working adults.

A quarter of women, and just a fifth of men, do not participate in at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity each week. Some say they are just too busy with work.

Mr Safi said: "Employers are increasingly aware of the negative impact poor health and fitness levels can have on employees' success both within and outside the workplace.

"Last year in the UK, it was estimated 137.3 million working days were lost due to sickness or injury, back and neck pain, stress, depression and anxiety. By increasing employees' physical activity levels it is possible that some of these conditions can be reduced."

He is assessing more than 500 staff at the university.

Candidate confirmed

THE official candidate to stand for the Conservative party in the Dudley North parliamentary seat has been selected.

Pedmore and Stourbridge East councillor Les Jones was chosen following a vote by members of the Conservative Association in Dudley North.

He will be competing for the seat against current Dudley North MP Ian Austin, of the Labour Party, and Sedgley councillor Bill Etheridge MEP who will be representing UKIP.

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Crime figures go up for third year in row

Jet plane rips up runway

The plane as it took off from Halfpenny Green during the family event

AN INVESTIGATION has been launched after an historic plane ripped up part of the runway at Halfpenny Green airfield, on the edge of the Black Country.

Dramatic footage posted to YouTube on Sunday revealed how the Vampire WZ507 plane tore up a section of runway as it took off from the airport near Bobbington, during an air show.

The strength of the plane's exhaust seemed to propel the surface of the runway into the air.

As the plane turned along the runway, the damage intensified, with debris from the runway surface hurtling upwards.

The plane left a stream of debris in its wake as it picked up speed along the runway, before launching above the crowds.

The episode will now be referred to the Civil Aviation Authority.

The video of the take-off was posted by Graham Innes on YouTube who said: "Looks like runway 10 at EGBO may be out of use for some time!

"Afterwards, the Vampire landed on another undamaged runway. Airfield staff were seen cleaning up debris on the runway for some time."

Kirsty Kirkpatrick, site manager, said: "I anticipate that the runway will be closed for at least four weeks so repairs can take place."

CRIME in the West Midlands has risen for the third successive year with violent offences and possession of weapons on the up.

Figures from the Office for National Statistics show the number of recorded offences went up 10 per cent from December 2015 to December last year – hitting 200,512 total crimes.

Possession of weapons increased 18 per cent to 1,571 incidents. Violence against a person rose 17 per cent, robbery increased to 17 per cent and vehicle offences went up 16 per cent across the region. Domestic burglary also shows an increase by 19 per cent to 13,470 incidents.

However police say this is a 'false increase' because all business and domestic burglaries are now recorded as one rather than separately. Drug offences were the only crime to drop in the region, falling by 11 per cent to 5,022 incidents.

In Dudley, crime increased by 10.6 per cent to 18,311 incidents. Robberies in the borough showed a marked increase going up 45 per cent in the year period from 278 to 403 incidents while possession of weapons went up 44 per cent to 124 offences.

Violence without injury – such as harassment or kidnapping – rose in the borough by more than 28 per cent while violence with injury rose 18 per cent to 2,143 incidents. It was Sandwell that saw the biggest rise in the Black Country with a 13 per cent increase to 21,442 incidents.

Violence with injury leapt 21 per cent to 2,883. Shoplifting rose 17 per cent to 2,014 incidents and violence without injury rocketed 44 per cent to 2,679 incidents. However crimes involving possessions of weapons offences dropped by more than five per cent.

A spokesman from West Midlands Police said: "We have seen a rise in reported crime. Our process for recording burglary has changed to include all business and domestic burglaries previously recorded separately. resulting in a potential false increase. "

Dudley Little Theatre actors, from left,Deb Attwood, Flora Deeley, Phil Sheffield and Ray Curran in Bedroom Farce

Bedroom antics and big laughs at centre

DUDLEY Little Theatre is poised to continue a long tradition of amateur dramatics with the final play of their current season.

They will be performing Alan Ayckbourn's Bedroom Farce later this month at the Netherton Arts Centre, where they have been staging shows every year since 1947.

Tony Stamp, who has been with the troupe for ten years, is directing his fellow amateur thespians for the first time, as they finish rehearsals for the classic comedy.

Mr Stamp said: "I have been a director elsewhere but was still a little worried about my directorial debut with the Little Theatre. However things have gone extremely well.

"The cast are very good and the play is extremely funny. It takes place in three bedrooms with couples who are either newly weds, middle aged or elderly. The main action is in the bedroom of the newly weds."

Rehearsals

Phil Sheffield plays the role of Malcolm, one half of the recently wedded pair, and he confirmed: "Rehearsals have been going well. I have never played the part of a newly wed before either on stage or in real life and so it has been interesting learning of the stresses that can go with it." The 45-year-old former manager of a Wine Rack store, who lives in Oldbury, said of the theatre group: "It is therapeutic and builds up confidence."

Bedroom Farce will be running at the Netherton Arts Centre in Northfield Road from Wednesday, May 10, to Saturday, May 13. The doors and bar open from 7pm and its curtain up at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £8 or £7 with concessions. Tickets can be bought online through dudleylittletheatre.org, on (01384) 872583 or on the door.

The group will next be in action in the play version of Willy Russell's Blood Brothers in late September.

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A thank you from me will never be enough

AN air ambulance crew who saved a pregnant woman's life after she was stabbed 24 times have been presented with a Pride of Birmingham Award.

Midlands Air Ambulance Charity's critical care paramedics Steven Mitchell and Karen Baker, along with pilot Richard Steele accepted the award last week.

The trio flew out of RAF Cosford after receiving a 999 call to help Natalie Queiroz, from Sutton Coldfield, who was stabbed when she was eight months pregnant, leaving her with life threatening wounds, and major blood loss. The crew were nominated for the Pride of Birmingham Emergency Services Award for their 'heroism and incredible skill under extreme pressure'.

Natalie paid an emotional tribute to them on the evening, thanking them for their quick work saving both her and her unborn baby.

She said: "My baby and I would not be here today if it was not for the Midlands Air Ambulance, and my other two daughters would not have their mum or little sister. Thank you will never be enough."

After receiving the initial 999 call, Helimed03 from the RAF Cosford airbase was immediately despatched to the scene with a three-man crew

Pilot Richard landed the helicopter safely on the High Street, as close to the patient as possible, and once mother and the unborn baby were stabilised at the scene, Natalie was in the air ambulance on her way to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham.

To find out more about the Midlands Air Ambulance Charity visit midlandsairambulance.com

Steven Mitchell, Natalie Queiroz from Sutton Coldfield and Richard Steele

New home for art exhibition

A DUDLEY trust has welcomed a new art exhibition. Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust is now home to Dudley Society of Artists.

Running until June 10, Canal-side features more than 50 diverse works by talented artists.

The society's former home was Castle High School and Visual Arts College, where the society meets weekly to work on their current projects, hold demonstrations and work on portraiture from live models.

For the past 89 years, Dudley Society of Artists has held its annual exhibition at Dudley Museum and Art Gallery. Following the closure of the Priory Street museum, Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust offered an alternative venue.

The exhibition is free to see at Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust's visitor centre, the Portal.

Holly Wain, the trust's heritage activities assistant, said: "We are thrilled to be able to champion the talent of local artists and promote the society and its work in our community."

Help find the driver who hit my teenage son

A MOTHER-OF-SEVEN has issued a plea for people to come forward with information after her teenage son was involved in a hit-and-run accident.

Matt Lucarelli, aged 17, had been walking his girlfriend to the bus stop when he was hit by the car outside his house in Powis Avenue, Tipton, on April 15. He was taken to Sandwell Hospital with a broken ankle and bruises, only regaining some of his memory about the incident now.

Matt with his mum Julie

Distraught mother, Julie Lucarelli, aged 49, who is a full-time carer, said: "I had just been shopping with my daughter and was on the way back home and I thought 'oh my God' what's going on outside my house as there were ambulances there.

"Then my other son phoned me up screaming down the phone saying that Matt had been run over.

Concerning

"I ran across the road but I was too scared to go by him. It was awful." She added: "He had crossed his girlfriend over the road to catch the bus and he was on the way back home when it happened.

"We think he was knocked out because when he was in the ambulance they thought his injuries were a lot worse than what they turned out to be."

Matt, who has minor learning difficulties, is now recovering at home.

He is currently studying public services at college. Mrs Lucarelli is now calling for more information about the accident and is asking for the police to be more involved.

She added: "The car that hit him had been dodging in and out of the traffic just before it hit Matt. No police turned up and no-one has properly been in contact since. When we went to West Bromwich station to complain they thought Matt had been injured in a car instead of actually hit by one – it is confusing and concerning. The main thing now is that we catch the person who did it."

Julie continued: "It was a horrible experience. When I saw him he didn't even realise who I was. The whole situation and the way it has been handled has been shocking."

Phoned

The family now hope that they can find the driver and bring him to court.

A spokesman for West Midlands Police said: "We were alerted to the incident from West Midlands Ambulance Service at 2.50pm on April 15.

"It was a car versus pedestrian and a male had injuries to his ankle and elbow. We have had conversations with his parents and they phoned to update us with what had happened. An appointment was made for us to go and see Matt."

Payment system alert

PEOPLE living in Dudley borough have been warned the council's online payment system will be unavailable for a short period in May for an upgrade.

It means that all council online payment systems will be unavailable from 7.45pm on May 16 until 11.59pm on May 18.

For more information call 0300 555 2345.

Stourbridge Chronicle Thursday, May 4, 2017

Bee helpful to buzzing friends in the garden

AS a new campaign is launched to urge gardeners to help bees – and people gear up for the Great British Bee Count – HANNAH STEPHENSON looks at ways to encourage our buzzing friends into the garden

I'M amazed at the numbers of bees I've seen on sunny days over the past couple of weeks, buzzing around the fragrant zingy yellow mahonia and purple heather in my garden.

It seems like a good omen for Bee Creative In The Garden! – a new campaign launched by the RHS in collaboration with the Wildlife Trusts to urge gardeners to help protect bees.

The campaign, which culminates in Wild About Gardens Week from Oct 23 to 29, featuring activities focused on how to help bees survive the winter ahead, comes as bees are under pressure due to loss of habitat.

In the countryside, 97 per cent of lowland meadow has already been lost and the dramatic decrease in suitable habitats isn't confined to rural areas. While the honeybee is an excellent pollinator, the charities are focusing on the equally valuable wild bees, including bumblebees and solitary bees.

Gardeners can download a wild bee-friendly gardening guide, and wildlife events and a "Bee Creative" photo competition are running to November 1 as part of the campaign.

Other charities are also joining the drive to help bees. Friends of the Earth is running The Great British Bee Count, now in its fourth year, from May 19 to June 30, which invites the public to download a free app to help identify bees and learn more about them.

The bee sightings will be mapped on greatbritishbeecount.co.uk and shared on the National Biodiversity Network, where researchers, experts and local authorities can access the data.

Ellie Brodie, senior policy manager of the Wildlife Trusts, says: "Anyone can take action to help wild bees whether you have a wall for vertical planting, window box, or back garden. It's easy to plant a bee haven and fun choosing between bee-friendly beauties such as borage, foxglove and honeysuckle."

The charities will be arming gardeners with the advice, insights and inspiration they need to create habitats that support wild bees as they emerge from their nests in early spring to forage for food.

So, what can we do?

BOOST YOUR BEE-FRIENDLY PLANT STOCK

Grow more flowers, shrubs and trees that provide nectar and pollen as food for bees and other pollinators throughout the year - pussy willow, primroses and crocuses in spring, lavenders, meadow cranesbill and ox-eye daisies in summer, ivy and hebes in autumn and mahonia and cyclamen in winter. As a general guide, bees see purple and blue better than other colours and will use their senses to find other colours such as white apple blossom. Different bee species prefer different flower shapes, so aim for a range from tubular-shaped flowers like snapdragons and wallflowers, to open-headed flowers like yarrow and verbena.

LET IT GROW WILD

Leave patches of land to grow wild with plants like stinging nettles and dandelions to provide other food sources (such as leaves for caterpillars) and breeding places for butterflies and moths. Take simple actions to manage your existing land, green spaces and gardens to provide food sources and/or breeding places for pollinators.

CUT GRASS LESS OFTEN

Native flowering plants in grass areas, field corners, verges and specially sown flower-rich habitats support the greatest diversity of insect pollinators by providing nectar and pollen resources, places to nest or breed, and leaves for caterpillars.

DO NOT DISTURB

Avoid disturbing or destroying nesting or hibernating insects in places like grass margins, bare soil, hedgerows, trees, dead wood or walls. Pollinators need to nest in safety so that they and the next generation can survive winter, and start again the next spring.

PESTICIDES?

Try to avoid using them. Many people avoid chemicals and adopt methods like physically removing pests or using barriers to deter them. Try to encourage natural predators like beetles.

:: Register to take part in this year's Great British Bee Count at www.greatbritishbeecount.co.uk

Thyme can be grown in different areas of the garden

Thyme to enjoy tulips as they take daffodils' place

BEST OF THE BUNCH – Tulip

AS daffodils fade, so tulips are emerging in too many different colours to mention and in many different varieties, some with almost frilly flowers which mingle happily with orange, yellow and burgundy wallflowers, others which look better grouped as stand-alone specimens.

If you're looking for a more flamboyant variety, look to the Parrot tulips which have frilly, fringed petals in late spring. Good choices include the red and yellow T. "Flaming Parrot" or T. "Estella Rijnveld" which is red and white, while more subtle varieties include T. "Spring Green", a Viridiflora variety with single cream flowers with partly greenish petals, or "Queen of Night", a deep burgundy-black variety which looks great against a green backdrop mixed with acid-coloured wallflowers. Plant tulips in late autumn in well-drained, fertile soil in full sun. Some need to be lifted after they have flowered and stored until planting time comes around again, while others can remain in the ground to flower again the following year.

BEST OF THE BUNCH – Thyme

There are few herbs which provide as much visual interest as thyme, partly because there are so many varieties which produce loads of tiny flowers in summer and masses of scent when you brush against them or run your fingers through them.

You don't just have to restrict thyme to your herb garden. Plant some pretty varieties to trail over your rockery and they should settle well in full sun. Try T. serpyllum "Annie Hall", a creeping, mound-forming plant with purple-pink flowers, or T. "Coccineus", with its crimson-pink flowers, over walls or in paving. Other good varieties include lemon-scented thyme T. x citriodorus, and T. vulgaris "Silver Posie". Thyme requires very little attention - water only in very dry conditions and feed sparingly.

WHAT TO DO THIS WEEK

:: Sow fast-maturing and late-flowering annuals directly into their flowering position

:: Move overwintered hardy annuals to their final flowering position

:: Water and feed plants in the greenhouse regularly

:: Feed seedlings and young plants which are growing poorly or have pale, yellowing foliage

It's never too young to start growing your own

Report by Lisa Salmon

KEEPING children occupied, and getting them to eat fruit and vegetables, can be really tough for parents.

But there's a simple way to successfully combine the two – by getting kids to plant seeds and grow and eat their own healthy produce.

Teaching children "food empathy" through sowing and growing means they'll have a better understanding of food and where it comes from, and that familiarity makes them much more likely to want to eat the food they've grown, says Michael Kelly, founder of the Grow It Yourself movement.

He says: "Getting children to grow their own food will help them to develop 'food empathy', which will follow them right through their lives.

"By growing some of their own food, they develop a better understanding of how food works, which is a proven lever to a healthier, happier life."

This year the Sow & Grow campaign, run by GIY and Innocent drinks, will teach more than 250,000 primary school children throughout the UK and Ireland how to grow their own food.

Appeal leaders will do this by sending free growing kits – including seeds, compost, growing cups and more – to their schools.

But sowing and growing is important at home too.

Kelly is keen to share some advice on how parents can get children to grow, eat and enjoy fruit and veg.

He suggests:

GROW IT

All you need is some soil or potting compost, seeds and a paper cup to get started.

"Kids will get a great buzz from seeing a little seedling emerge from the soil and having a real plant to mind," says Kelly.

"They're more likely to try vegetables like spinach and peas when they've grown them themselves.

"Even the smallest food growing experiences have huge value in helping children to understand where their food comes from," he adds.

LET THEM CHOOSE

Kids are far more curious about food than we give them credit for, so get them to create a shopping list.

Then, take your child to the supermarket and let them see, smell and feel the fruit and vegetables with you.

VARIETY IS KEY

Immersing kids from a young age in trying lots of different foods will cultivate a diverse diet.

A child as young as two can help you to wash fruit and vegetables and in doing so, you can explore new colours and shapes together.

CHALLENGE

Encourage children to develop new skills in the kitchen by asking them to make a simple salad.

They can tear up broccoli or lettuce for a salad, scrub potatoes and cut soft foods like strawberries and ripe tomatoes with a child-friendly knife.

Encouraging children to grow their own vegetables from an early age can help them understand where food comes from, it is claimed

It's an age old problem – how to convince children to eat their greens

Grown It Yourself founder Michael Kelly has tips for parents

BE CREATIVE

Work with your child to create food art – from watermelon flowers to animal-inspired snacks.

Even the pickiest of eaters won't be able to resist a plate full of colours.

EDUCATE

Each week, teach your child about a new fruit or vegetable – maybe one they've picked themselves at the supermarket – and work on a new recipe together.

TEXTURE v TASTE

Have a raw and cooked vegetable option so your child can choose the one they like best. Some children like the crunch in raw vegetables, while others like vegetables to be soft.

HAVE FUN

Let your child's imagination run wild and get them trying different combinations of food together to make smoothies.

You're more likely to gauge a child's interest in fruit and veg by letting them experiment.

INVOLVE FRIENDS

Involving their friends when getting ready for dinner is a fun, mucky, hands-on activity.

For instance, you can create a mini-assembly line of food that needs mixing, rolling, washing etc.

DON'T GIVE UP

If you're finding it hard to get your child to eat fruit and veg, try and work it into other recipes.

For example, children will like cress; particularly if it's in an egg salad, so let them be in charge of sprinkling it into the dish.

● For more on Grow It Yourself and Sow & Grow, visit giy.ie/

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WILDACRE RESCUE

Stourbridge Chronicle Thursday, May 4, 2017

Twin-centre trip that can meet all family needs

IT'S one of family travel's trickiest conundrums.

How do you please mum and dad as well as the tiny travellers? How to balance a need for sandcastles with a desire to trek around real castles?

The answer may well lie in two less familiar parts of that very familiar destination – the Costa del Sol, writes Victoria Pollitt.

We mixed a city break in Malaga with child-friendly sun and swimming in Estepona – and everyone was happy. We flew with Norwegian Air, which is rapidly expanding its flights from Manchester Airport. There was good legroom, discounts on child tickets and free WiFi on board with entertainment and children's programmes to watch on your own tablets and phones. It's clear why the company has won Europe's best low-cost airline for four years running.

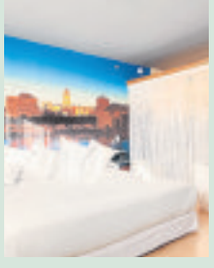
Our first stop – the city of Malaga – is often overlooked as just an airport. But this is a child-friendly city – ours loved walking around the 1,000-year-old fortress palace Alcazaba and tasting tapas in Plaza de la Merced. There are gorgeous gardens, playgrounds a plenty plus a modern, renovated port area.

There are beaches too. On Playa San Andres you can get a well-priced paella and a dip in the sea – 10 minutes' walk from our hotel.

The Barceló Málaga, next to the train station, is one of the most modern hotels around. Our suite was straight out of a designer's dream and bath time will never be the same again for our six and two-year-old after enjoying the jacuzzi in the bathroom.

They liked the slide almost as much. Not outside the hotel – this one is inside – taking guests from their tasty breakfast on the first floor down to reception to explore the city.

After two days, it was time to head 50 miles south for part two. A good tip if you need car seats – there's a company called Tots Store which provides proper modern seats and meets you in arrivals at Malaga Airport to get you kitted out.



Safely strapped in we head down the motorway. Next stop relaxation as we checked in at the Kempinski Hotel Bahía on the outskirts of Estepona. The town itself is more traditionally Spanish than the likes of Marbella and Torremolinos. Think packed plazas and tasty tapas at every turn.

The Kempinski is the area's premier hotel – and you can see why. It's worth a stay here for the pool alone. Or should I say pools, there are four after all.

The main children's one is perfect for small swimmers, winding its way under bridges and past trees so you can create your own adventures.

The beach in front of the hotel has enough sand to bury a dad up to his knees, enough stones to keep a two-year-old happy and the gentle waves of the Mediterranean inviting everyone in for a swim with views of Gibraltar on a clear day.

The hotel has four restaurants, a spa, gym and indoor pool. Rooms are spacious and luxurious with beautiful views. It's an upmarket hotel but caters for children well with a kids' corner at the breakfast buffet, mini dressing gowns and an ice cream bar along with a children's club at peak times.

After five days, two hotels, one city and one town, our last night was the same as our first – the four of us sharing a paella at a beachfront restaurant.

Even on a twin-stop balanced break there are some things equally popular with all of us.

● Norwegian Air (Fares from £29.90 at www.norwegian.com/uk) Accommodation: Barceló Málaga hotel (www.barcelo.com) and Kempinski Hotel Bahía in Estepona (www.kempinski.com).

The new Furchester Hotel Live Show building

Presenters Chris and Pui with Freya Thursfield

Lots of fun at the launch event at the Furchester Hotel

Furry friends help to bring new show to life

CBeebies presenters Ben Cajee and Cat Sandion with Furchester characters Elmo and Phoebe outside the new Furchester Hotel Live Show at Alton Towers Resort

HOLIDAYS

By Tim Thursfield

'WE welcome you with furry arms!'

The words echoed over the glorious sunny skies of Alton, Staffordshire.

Or to be more precise – Alton Towers Resort.

Britain's number one theme park has extended the popular CBeebies Land section of the park by adding two new attractions for 2017.

Youngsters can now meet the likes of Funella, Phoebe, Fergus, Isabel, Elmo and not forgetting Cookie Monster in the brand new Furchester Hotel show, which allows children and their grown-up counterparts to enjoy the escapades of their favourite furry monsters, before feathered singing superstar Chick Swagger performs his 'hit' songs, encouraging excited onlookers to join in with the fun and frantic dance moves.

Also on offer is the Vroomster Go Jetters ride, where passengers can control the rotating spaceship and imagine battling the mischievous Grandmaster Glitch.

Myself, my wife and my five-year-old daughter have visited CBeebies Land previously, and so were thrilled when we were invited to try out the new attractions.

On arriving at the Alton Towers Hotel we were quickly escorted to our room by a very prompt and courteous porter.

The moon voyage bedroom in which we stayed was impressive and my daughter was most impressed when she realised that she had her own television and X Box console.

We then made our way to the Ubercorn Disco which was specifically designed for the youngsters, featuring regular visits from characters Elmo, Grandmaster Glich and a fun DJ spot from Go Jetters 'Ubercorn' himself. To add to that there was a large buffet on offer to all guests and games for all of the children.

I have to say that Alton Towers always seems to go the extra mile to impress their guests, and the welcome disco was no exception.

After a much-needed sleep in our futuristic space ship style bedroom (nanoo nanoo!), it was then time to rise for an early breakfast. It was more a case of 'We welcome you with blurry eyes!' rather than the famous Furchester Hotel catchphrase as we searched for eggs, toast and a cuppa.

We soon forgot about the early start though when we spotted some of the famous faces seen regularly on the CBeebies channel.

My daughter was over the moon to be having a chat with the likes of Chris and Pui while munching on her toast. I know this means nothing to people who never watch children's television, but it's a big deal to young fans of CBeebies.

It was then time to frantically make our way to the launch parade where the stars of Cbeebies and the likes of Danielle Lloyd, JB from JLS and other stars made their way to the new attractions at CBeebies Land.

After the spectacular launch event it was time to see what all the fuss was about.

As we made our way into the new Furchester Hotel live show every child battled for the front row before joining in with the fun provided by all of the favourite characters from the hit show. My daughter revelled in finding Cookie Monster's cookies and joining in with the dance move.

After the show it was time to experience the new Vroomster Zoom Ride.

Although the queue was quite long it was well worth the wait as youngsters launch from the jetpad and fly around various landmarks such as the leaning tower of Pizza and a Grandmaster Glitch style Statue of Liberty in the Vroomster.

It's a shame that CBeebies Land does not allow the use of fast track wristbands, but once on the rides they do not disappoint for youngsters.

The two new attractions are an excellent addition to the line-up of 12 other rides and attractions.

The last word should go to my five-year-old daughter who thought the whole day and the new attractions were simply 'awesome!'. Nothing else needs to be said.

● Alton Towers theme park tickets is from £27.50pp when booking online more than 5 days in advance. Overnight stays at the Resort are from £135 per room, B&B, based on a family of four sharing.

● The CBeebies Land Hotel, which opens in July is from £200, including B&B, based on a family of 4 sharing.

The Ticket

A GRAND NIGHT OUT FOR EVITA

INSIDE

MUSIC + TV GUIDE + PUZZLES + MORE

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Sat 1st Jul Play It Again Sam
Sat 15th Jul The Hype

Another suitcase, another hall – Evita hits the Grand stage

Leading lights – Emma Hatton and Gian Marco Schiaretti

Don't cry for me, Wolverhampton

It took Emma Hatton approximately 0.1 seconds to make a decision when she was asked to play the lead role in Evita. The actress and singer, best known for playing Elphaba in the West End production of Wicked, jumped at the chance to lead the line.

Having starred in major musicals, playing Donna in Dreamboats and Petticoats, she was thrilled to playing the lead in one of the greatest musicals of all.

Bill Kenwright's production of Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd-Webber's Evita is on the road following its smash hit run at London's Dominion Theatre. It will reach Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre on Tuesday and play until May 13.

Telling the story of Eva Perón, wife of former Argentine dictator Juan Perón, Evita follows Eva's journey from humble beginnings through to extraordinary wealth, power and iconic status. She is ultimately heralded as the 'spiritual leader of the nation' by the Argentine people.

Starring two of musical theatre's most outstanding leading performers; Emma and Gian Marco Schiaretti, who is embarking on his first UK tour having played the title role in Disney's production of Tarzan, audiences can anticipate a five-star performance.

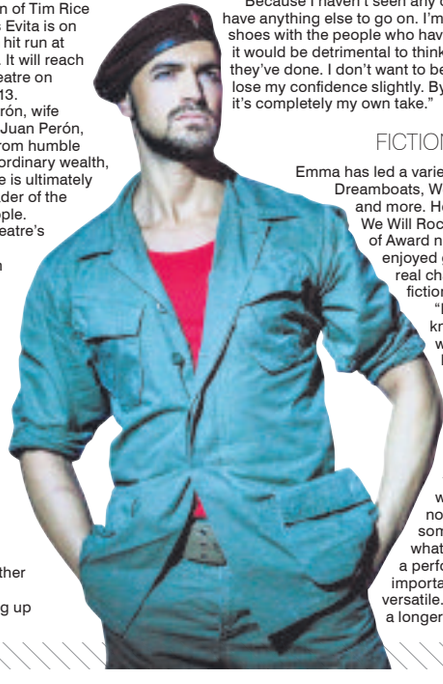
Evita has more than 20 major awards to its credit and the Oscar-winning film version starred Madonna and Antonio Banderas. It features some of the most iconic songs in musical theatre, including Don't Cry For Me Argentina, On This Night of a Thousand Stars, You Must Love Me, and Another Suitcase in Another Hall.

Emma has enjoyed picking up the baton and enjoys every performance. It's one of the most iconic roles in musical theatre. It didn't take me very long to say yes to that. I've never done anything like this before.

"I'd never seen a production of it but had watched the film many years ago. It was nice to come into the project. I knew the bare bones of it and had a grasp of what it was about. I've had the opportunity to learn so much about her story and the Argentinian history but I wasn't familiar with a lot of it before."

That knowledge gap proved advantageous to Emma , who was able to originate her character from scratch – rather than trying to imitate another actress's performance.

"Because I haven't seen any of the productions, I don't have anything else to go on. I'm stepping into quite big shoes with the people who have played it before. But it would be detrimental to think too much about what they've done. I don't want to be caught up on others, I'd lose my confidence slightly. By approaching it myself, it's completely my own take."



FICTIONAL

Emma has led a varied career, playing in Dreamboats, We Will Rock You, Wicked and more. Her roles in Wicked and We Will Rock You won her a slew of Award nominations. But she's enjoyed getting her teeth into a real character, rather than a fictional one.

"I think it's a very well known show that was very well written and is well loved. To portray a real life character is a privilege and something to be respected. And both vocally and in terms of acting, it's been a massive challenge. I took the role as much to see whether I could do it or not. I like a challenge. It's something very different to what I've done before. From a performing perspective, it's important for people to see I'm versatile. Hopefully that will lead to a longer career."

> *I took the role to see whether I could do it or not . . . I like a challenge*

The responses from theatre audiences up and down the country has been ecstatic. Emma's been revelling in the joy that her characterisation has bought. "I didn't realise how loved this show was.

"The audiences have been very full houses and seem to really love the show. You feel that warmth from the show. Long may that last."

And yet Emma will be keen to do something different at the end of Evita's present run. While she lives and breathes every moment, she's tied to the diversity that's present in her career and relishes taking on different roles.

"I was the original cast for Dreamboats. I got to work with the writers and worked closely with them on the characterisation and the script. The music of that era was so gorgeous and then moving on to do We Will Rock You, then Wicked, gave me the opportunity to do something different. I enjoy that.

"I think there's a difference between being in the West End and being on the road. The routine is very different and the discipline has to be a lot stronger on tour because of the travelling and what it takes out of your body. To be on the road, you're living out of a suitcase and are away from your family. You need more strength of character. You're away from loved ones and your own bed. But you get to go to your beautiful cities and see beautiful theatres. And every part of the UK and Europe has a very different vibe.

"I hadn't toured for a while so I was ready to get on the road and show the UK what we're about."

Another suitcase another hall. Emma's role in Evita is the classic case of life imitating art.

● **For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.**

The all-inclusive Tommy cast

Rock on, Tommy as musical makes return

The Who's epic, award-winning musical, Tommy rocks into Birmingham Repertory Theatre later this month.

Directed by Kerry Michael, it features two new songs written exclusively for the new tour by The Who's guitarist and lyricist Pete Townshend.

Based on the iconic 1969 rock concept album, Tommy is the tale of the pinball-playing boy, an exhilarating story of hope, healing, and the human spirit which has entertained for more than 40 years.

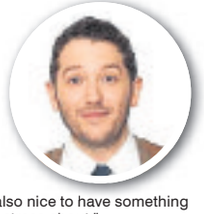
The cast of 22 includes Peter Straker as the Acid Queen, alongside an inclusive cast of deaf and disabled and non-disabled actors.

The production will feature a new version of Amazing Journey to open the show and a brand new song, Acid Queen 2 for Act Two alongside classics Tommy Can You Hear Me, I'm Free, See Me Feel Me and Pinball Wizard. The production follows young Tommy after he witnesses the murder of his father by his mother's lover. Traumatised, he chooses to stop communicating with the outside world as he grows up in post-Second World War England, where he suffers abuse from relatives and others in the wider community. But as an adolescent, Tommy's life begins to change when he finds salvation in playing pinball.

In this new staging every performance features a creative use of audio description, captioning and British Sign Language interpretation.

Tommy plays at Birmingham Repertory Theatre from May 17 to 27 with show times at 7.30pm Monday to Saturday and matinees at 2pm on Thursday and and Saturday. Tickets start from £15. Book online at birmingham-rep.co.uk or via the box office on 0121 236 4455.

Richardson the daddy of comics



With a two-month old daughter, stand-up comic Jon Richardson admits that life at home is very chaotic at the minute.

So the proud new father believes this is the perfect time to be going on tour. "Gigs have become very cathartic for me, as things are so hectic at home," he said.

For him, being on stage is now the equivalent of going to the pub or the cinema.

"Our baby is only two months old, so it's obviously the perfect time for me to be leaving home for several weeks," said the funnyman.

"It has to be said, I'm not terribly popular at home. But I'm assuming that by the time I get back home, my daughter will be toilet-trained, capable of dressing herself and able to drive." Richardson's new show, Old Man – a follow up to Funny Magnet and Nidiot – is packed with reflections on the trials and tribulations of new fatherhood.

He even discloses some of the more bizarre incidents that have occurred since the new arrival.

One of Jon's main worries is that his daughter will grow up resembling him. "What I'm dreading is raising her to be like me," he says. "If I hear her saying, 'I can't eat that chip because it's touched those baked beans', I'll know she got too much of me in her!"

He adds: "I'm determined not to talk about my baby in a way that's alienating.

But it's been such a big change in my life that I can't not talk about it. It's also nice to have something new to stress about."

The comedian, who has starred on such TV shows as 8 out of 10 Cats Does Countdown, Have I Got News For You, Live At The Apollo, Channel 4's Comedy Gala Live At The 02 and more recently Taskmaster on Dave has been attracting a host of critical plaudits and performs at Birmingham's Hippodrome tonight (Thursday).

But, much as he loves touring, Richardson reveals: "I'll have a break over the summer. People would rather be out in the sun than inside listening to a whingeing moron!"

For tickets, call 0844 338 5000 or visit www.birminghamhippodrome.com

Adam ready to Stand And Deliver

New Romantic 1980s heartthrob is back in the leather jacket and ready to Stand And Deliver at the Symphony Hall, Birmingham, with back-to-back gigs on May 12 and 13.

The King of the Wild Frontier will be performing the hits, such as Ant Music and Prince Charming on his Anthems: The Singles Tour, and also promises a few lesser known tracks for the hardcore fans and some of his personal favourites.

Give your Verdict on courtroom drama

Former Casualty star Clive Mantle and Jack Shepherd of Wycliffe fame star in courtroom thriller The Verdict at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre this week.

Made famous by the Oscar-nominated Sidney Lumet film starring Paul Newman, Charlotte Rampling and James Mason, it opened on Tuesday and runs until Saturday. Book on 01902 429212 or at www.grandtheatre.co.uk

Elsewhere, comedians Omid Djalili and Micky Flanagan perform in Birmingham. Djalili is at the Symphony Hall tomorrow night (Friday), with Flanagan at the Barclaycard Arena from May 18 to 20. Also in the Second City, the Robert Cray Band performs on Sunday night, Procul Harum are at the Town Hall on May 11 and Adam Ant at the Symphony Hall on May 12 and 13.

SATURDAY'S TV MAY 6

CHOICE

Peter Capaldi

Doctor Who (BBC1, 7.20pm)
Bill and some of her friends decide to move in together, and find what seems to be the perfect house. However, the absurdly cheap rent, and a decidedly creepy landlord (played by guest star David Suchet) suggest that domestic bliss might not yet be on the cards. The Doctor believes something is seriously wrong with his assistant's new home, plagued as it is with strange drafts and oddly creaky floorboards, and that's without considering the ominous tower found at the very heart of the building – one that doesn't seem to have an entrance. Peter Capaldi and Pearl Mackie star, with Matt Lucas.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Mary Berry's Absolute Favourites. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Usain Bolt: The Final Chapter. **1.45** Athletics: Diamond League Qatar Highlights. **2.45** Bargain Hunt. (R) **3.45** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.30** Final Score. **5.30** Who Dares Wins.

6.10 BBC News.

6.20 Regional Programme.

6.30 Pointless Celebrities. Richard Park, David Grant, Ben Forster, Danielle Hope, Patti Boulaye, Nina Myskow, Jamie Raven, and Ashleigh and Pudsey take part in a talent-show themed edition of the quiz.

7.20 Doctor Who. Bill moves into a new house with her friends, complete with creaking floorboards, a creepy landlord, and a strangely inaccessible tower at its heart. Guest starring David Suchet.

8.05 Casualty. Louise confronts Jez about his infidelity, but when he comes clean and reveals his secret squeeze is Mickey, she is left stunned. A revelation about the events of the previous week leaves Ethan reeling, and Charlie makes it is personal mission to restore the spirits of everyone in the ED.

9.00 Michael McIntyre: Happy & Glorious. A chance to see a show from the popular stand-up star's 2015 tour of the UK and Ireland, recorded as-live at the O2 in London. Returning to a venue he has visited 27 times in the past, more than any other artist in the world, Michael showcases his particular brand of wit, taking aim once again at some of the absurdities of everyday life.

10.00 BBC News; Weather.; National Lottery Update.

10.20 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Swansea City v Everton at the Liberty Stadium and Hull City v Sunderland at the KCOM Stadium.

11.40 Murder in Successville. A radioactive monster seems to be on the loose in Successville, and DI Sleet enlists the aid of new assistant Lorraine Kelly to get to the bottom of the mystery.

12.10 Film: Flatliners. (1990) **2.00** Weather for the Week Ahead. **2.05** BBC News.

BBC2

6.25 Film: That's Entertainment! III. (1994) **8.20** Talking Pictures: Musicals. (R) **9.05 Film:** Silk Stockings. (1957) **11.00** Monty Halls' Great Hebridean Escape. (R) **12.00** Great British Menu. (R) **12.30** Great British Menu. (R) **1.00** Great British Menu. (R) **1.30 Film:** 4 for Texas. (1963) Comedy Western, starring Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra. **3.20** Trust Me, I'm A Vet. (R) **4.20** Flog It! (R) **4.55** Gardeners' World. (R) **5.25** Springwatch in Japan: Cherry Blossom Time. (R)

6.25 Japan's Northern Wilderness. Part one of two. Naturalist Steve Backshall and two-time Olympic gold medal-winning rower Helen Glover explore the landscapes and culture of northern Japan.

7.20 Trump on Culture: Brave New World? Alastair Sooke visits the US to investigate what impact President Donald Trump's plans to scrap federal funding for the arts might have on the nation's cultural landscape.

8.00 Grand Tours of Scotland. Paul Murton explores the rise of the seaside as a popular tourist destination, travelling from St Andrews via the Firth of Forth to North Berwick and Edinburgh. Last in the series.

8.30 Dad's Army. The men of the Walmington-on-Sea Home Guard platoon take charge when a large naval gun is delivered to the church hall. Classic comedy, starring Arthur Lowe and John Le Mesurier. (R)

9.00 Film: Nightcrawler. (2014) Premiere. A cynical petty crook is inspired when he sees a freelance camera crew, and decides to go into business filming crime scenes and accidents, then selling the footage to news broadcasters. His determination to stay ahead of the competition leads him down a dark path as his methods become increasingly ruthless. Crime drama, starring Jake Gyllenhaal, Rene Russo and Bill Paxton.

10.50 QI XL. Jimmy Carr, Aisling Bea and Danny Bhoy compete alongside resident panellist Alan Davies, as question master Stephen Fry muddles through the middle show of the middle series.

11.35 Versailles; (R) Inside Versailles.

12.35 Film: The Big Kahuna. (1999) **2.00** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.25** Sooty. (R) **6.35** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Marvel Avengers Assemble. (R) **7.30** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.55** NinjaGo: Masters of Spinjitzu. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** ITV Racing: The Opening Show. **10.20** Judge Rinder. (R) **11.20** Tipping Point. (R) **12.20** ITV News; Weather. **12.25** Bigheads. (R) **1.30** ITV Racing: Live from Newmarket. Coverage of today's race meetings at Newmarket and Goodwood. **4.00** Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs. (R) **4.30** Catchphrase. (R) **5.15** Britain's Got More Talent.

6.15 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.25 ITV News; Weather.

6.45 Take Me Out. A firefighter, a barber, a test driver and a gym instructor enter the "love lift" in the hope of impressing 30 single women and winning a date – but they must first get the female participants to keep their lights on as a sign of approval.

8.00 Britain's Got Talent. Another selection of would-be stars are given a chance to demonstrate their unique talents, as the fourth round of auditions gets under way. As always, Simon Cowell, Amanda Holden, David Walliams and Alesha Dixon will beckon each act into the spotlight, where they must show off their skills to the best of their ability if they are to secure the panel's attention and win a place in the next round of the contest. However, for those performers whose skits capture the hearts of either the judges, or Ant and Dec, a simple tap of the golden buzzer could see them progress straight through to the live shows.

9.15 The Keith and Paddy Picture Show. New series. Keith Lemon and Paddy McGuinness remake Hollywood movies, and begin by casting Jessica Hynes, Larry Lamb, John Barrowman and Kimberly Wyatt in Dirty Dancing.

9.45 Film: The 40 Year-Old Virgin. (2005) Comedy, starring Steve Carell and Catherine Keener.

10.45 ITV News; Weather.

11.05 Film: The 40 Year-Old Virgin. (2005) Continued.

12.15 Jackpot247. **3.00** Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.15 Mobil 1 The Grid. **6.40** Motor Sport: British GT. **7.10** The King of Queens. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Frasier. (R) **8.55** Frasier. (R) **9.25** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **9.55** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.25** The Simpsons. (R) **10.55** The Simpsons. (R) **11.30** The Simpsons. (R) **12.00** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) **12.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **1.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **1.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.30** Come Dine with Me. (R) **3.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **3.35** A Place in the Sun: Summer Sun. (R) **4.35** Big House, Little House. **5.35** Location, Location, Location. (R)

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 The Restoration Man. George Clarke revisits Dave and Margaret Hedley for a second time, hoping to see what progress has been made on their ambitious plan to restore a derelict 17th-century water mill in Northumberland. After eight years toiling away at the project, Dave and Margaret have seen off historic levels of flooding and a devastating illness, and have hand-built a working replica of the mill's old water wheel. In the threshing barn, the pair's impeccable restoration work is on full display, and George discovers how the water wheel is about to take on a new purpose for the 21st century.

8.00 Walking Through Time. Palaeobiologist Dr Tori Herridge and Professor Adrian Lister visit Shropshire to discuss analysis into the remains of five mammoths found in a quarry in 1986. (R)

9.00 Film: The Fault in Our Stars. (2014) Premiere. Indianapolis teenager Hazel has terminal thyroid cancer and attends a patients' support group, where she meets fellow teen Gus, who lost a leg to the disease. The two fall in love and a shared passion for books leads them on a literary pilgrimage to Amsterdam in search of reclusive author Peter van Houten. Romantic drama based on the bestselling novel by John Green, starring Shailene Woodley, Ansel Elgort, Laura Dern and Willem Dafoe.

11.35 Film: Ghost. (1990) Romantic fantasy, starring Demi Moore.

1.45 The 80s: Ten Years That Changed Britain. (R) **3.05** Hollyoaks. (R) **5.05** Jamie's Comfort Food. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** Access. (R) **10.40** Caught on Camera. (R) **11.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.00** On Benefits: The Bargain Queen. (R) **1.00** On Benefits: Breadline Brummies. (R) **2.00** On Benefits: Cash-Strapped Couples. (R) **3.00** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **4.00** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **5.00** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R)

6.00 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. The agents chase £4,500 owed to a shipping company by a car parts dealer in Lancashire, and in east London, the officers try to collect over £2,000 owed to a housing association. (R)

6.55 5 News Weekend.

7.00 NCIS: Los Angeles. The FBI's domestic terrorist task force steps in to help the team when a former marine is suspected of creating a chemical bomb.

7.45 NCIS. A US Navy Public Affairs Officer is killed, and when the team takes up the case, both the man's wife and his mistress emerge as potential suspects. Each woman offering a very different take on the chain of events that led to the murder, and the investigators are forced to decide which of the two is telling the truth. Meanwhile, DiNozzo's father comes to the aid of a homeless woman, who makes a surprising claim about his relationship with her. Guest starring Robert Wagner.

8.45 Film: Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves. (1991) An English nobleman returns home from the crusades to find his father has been murdered and the local people are repressed by the tyrannical rule of the Sheriff of Nottingham. Branded an outlaw, he recruits a group of bandits to fight for justice and protect the downtrodden. Action adventure, starring Kevin Costner, Alan Rickman and Morgan Freeman. Edited for violence and language. Includes a 5 News Update at 9.45pm.

11.45 Football on 5: Goal Rush. Action from the final fixtures of the regular season in League Two, including Luton Town v Morecambe, Hartlepool United v Doncaster Rovers, and Newport County v Notts County.

12.15 SuperCasino. **3.10 Film:** Beyond a Reasonable Doubt. (2009)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Dan Cruickshank: At Home with the British **8.00** The BBC at War **9.00** Hinterland **10.30** Top of the Pops: 1983 **11.45** Genesis: Together & Apart **1.20** TOTP2: Genesis **2.05** Prog at the BBC **3.05** Sounds of the Eighties **3.30** Close

ITV2
11.05 Britain's Got Talent **12.25** Britain's Got More Talent **1.25** Take Me Out **2.40** Take Me Out – The Gossip **3.40** You've Been Framed! **4.10 Film:** Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang (2010) **5.10** FYI Daily **5.15 Film:** Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang (2010) **6.25 Film:** Paul Blart: Mall Cop (2009) **7.25** FYI Daily **7.30 Film:** Paul Blart: Mall Cop (2009) **8.15** Scorpion **9.15** Britain's Got More Talent **10.20** Celebrity Juice **11.20** Family Guy **12.50 Film:** Delivery Man (2013) **1.55** FYI Daily **2.00 Film:** Delivery Man (2013) **2.45** The Hot Desk: The Vamps **2.55** Teleshopping **5.55** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
12.50 Wycliffe **1.55** Lewis **5.55** Rosemary & Thyme **7.00** Midsomer Murders **9.00** Foyle's War **11.00** Law & Order: UK **2.00** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4
11.00 British Superbike Championship Highlights **12.05** Road Racing Series **1.10 Film:** Superman (1978) **2.10** FYI Daily **2.15 Film:** Superman (1978) **4.05** The Car Chasers **5.05** Pawn Stars **6.05** Storage Wars **7.05** The Sweeney **8.05** Better Late Than Never **9.00 Film:** Lethal Weapon 4 (1998) **10.05** FYI Daily **10.10 Film:** Lethal Weapon 4 (1998) **11.30 Film:** American Gangster (2007) **12.30** FYI Daily **12.35 Film:** American Gangster (2007) **2.35** The Car Chasers **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
11.00 The Goldbergs **12.30 Film:** Astro Boy (2009) **2.15 Film:** The Net (1995) **4.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** Hanna (2011) **11.10** Gogglebox **1.20** Rude Tube **2.25** Tattoo Fixers **3.20** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **4.05** How I Met Your Mother **4.45** Black-ish **5.05** Charmed

Film4
11.00 The Rugrats Movie (1999) **1.00** Dr Seuss' The Lorax (2012) **2.40** Short Circuit (1986) **4.40** A Thousand Words (2012) **6.35** Mrs Doubtfire (1993) **9.00** Aliens (1986) Sci-fi thriller sequel, starring Sigourney Weaver. **12.05** The Woman in Black: Angel of Death (2014) Horror sequel, starring Helen McCrory and Jeremy Irvine. **2.00** American Mary (2012) **4.00** Close

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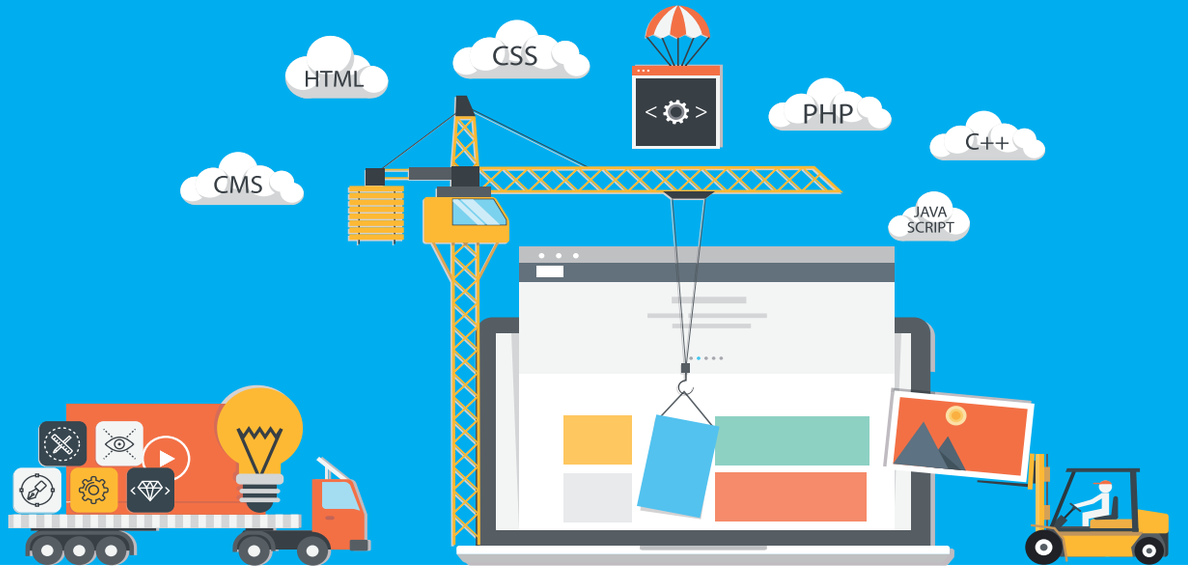

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SUNDAY'S TV MAY 7

CHOICE

Samantha Spiro

Babs (BBC1, 8pm)
Biopic of Barbara Windsor, following the key events of her life over the course of 50 years. The story begins in 1993, with the actress preparing for a stage performance, before flashing back to her childhood as a lonely evacuee in the Second World War, her rise to fame in the Carry On films and her difficult relationships with her father and her first husband, gangster Ronnie Knight. Samantha Spiro, Jaime Winstone and Windsor herself share the lead role.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.40** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News. **1.15** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **2.15** Money for Nothing. (R) **3.00** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.00** Points of View. **4.15** Songs of Praise. **4.50** Pointless Celebrities. (R) **5.35** BBC News. **5.50** Regional Programme.

6.00 Countryfile. The latest rural developments, including reports on issues affecting country communities and insights into the life of the modern farmer.

7.00 Antiques Roadshow. Fiona Bruce presents the show from Ightham Mote, a medieval manor near Sevenoaks. Objects brought in to be valued include a gold ring containing a lock of Lord Byron's hair, a pair of Chinese paintings, and a collection of postcards from 1916 that reveal the story of how a British PoW sent secret messages back to his family.

8.00 Babs. Biopic of Barbara Windsor, following her life between 1943 and 1993, including her evacuation in the Second World War, her rise to fame and her marriage to gangster Ronnie Knight.

9.30 Mrs Brown's Boys. Agnes tries to make friends with Dermot's mother-in-law Hillary ahead of the baby's birth, and suggests they go out to dinner together. However, the evening comes to an abrupt end for the two feuding matriarchs when expectant mum Maria goes into labour, and the Browns are forced to rush her to hospital. Comedy, written by and starring Brendan O'Carroll. (R)

10.00 BBC News.

10.20 Regional Programme.

10.30 Match of the Day 2. Mark Chapman reviews the latest Premier League action, featuring Liverpool v Southampton at Anfield and Arsenal v Manchester United at the Emirates Stadium. The Saints are set for a mid-table finish, but the other three teams involved needed three points to boost their chances of finishing in the top four.

11.40 The Women's Football Show. Tina Daheley and guests reflect on the weekend's FA Women's Super League Spring Series action.

12.15 Weather for the Week Ahead.
12.20 BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **7.00** The Instant Gardener. (R) **7.45** Gardeners' World. (R) **8.15** The Beechgrove Garden. **8.45** Countryfile. (R) **9.45** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.15** Great British Menu. (R) **11.45** Great British Menu. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** Rugby Highlights. **2.00** Equestrian: Badminton Horse Trials. Live coverage of the three-day eventing competition. **4.00** Rowing World Cup. Live coverage of the opening meeting of the season from Belgrade. **5.30** Flog It! (R) **5.55 Film:** The Terminal. (2004) Comedy, starring Tom Hanks and Catherine Zeta-Jones.

8.00 Mexico: Earth's Festival of Life. New series. The first of three programmes about the wildlife, landscape and culture in different areas of the country explores the Sierra Madre mountains, and reveals how this rugged landscape has shaped the nation. This chain of peaks includes several volcanoes and is home to a wide variety of animals, including black bears, monarch butterflies, orchid bees and quetzals. The programme also visits the ruins of an ancient Aztec shrine and the blue agave plant which grows in the mountains is used in making tequila.

9.00 Dara and Ed's Road to Mandalay. New series. Dara O Briain and Ed Byrne explore South East Asia, travelling more than 3,000 miles from Malaysia to Myanmar as they forge their way to the historic city of Mandalay. The comedians begin their journey in the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur, where they watch a beauty pageant for chickens and join a mass cycle ride through the city.

10.00 Film: Kajaki. (2014) Premiere. A group of paratroopers are pushed to their limits while trying to find a safe route out of a minefield in Afghanistan. Fact-based thriller, starring David Elliot.

11.40 Film: The Reluctant Fundamentalist. (2012) A Pakistani professor tells a journalist how he was driven to radical politics in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. Drama, starring Riz Ahmed and Liev Schreiber.

1.40 Sign Zone: Question Time. Topical debate from Wigan. (R) **2.40** Holby City. (R) **3.40** This Is BBC Two. Preview of upcoming programmes.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.25** Sooty. (R) **6.35** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Marvel Avengers Assemble. (R) **7.30** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.55** NinjaGo: Masters of Spinjitzu. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Countrywise. (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **11.00** Judge Rinder. (R) **12.00** ITV News; Weather. **12.10** Britain's Got Talent. (R) **1.30** ITV Racing: Live from Newmarket. Coverage of today's race meetings at Newmarket and Hamilton Park. **4.05 Film:** Diamonds Are Forever. (1971) James Bond spy adventure, starring Sean Connery.

6.35 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.40 ITV News; Weather.

7.00 Bigheads. Jason Manford hosts the comedy game show in which contestants compete in a series of bizarre physical challenges while wearing giant model heads of Victoria Beckham, Winston Churchill, Elton John and Will.i.am. They must dodge past giant bouncers to get into a nightclub, steal champagne, and get away before the paparazzi see them. With commentary from Jenny Powell and Kriss Akabusi.

8.00 The Durrells. Louisa struggles to adapt to Larry moving out. The thought of all her children leaving her drives her to set aside her doubts about pursuing a relationship with Hugh, which leads to a revealing conversation about Vasilia. The younger Durrell children are not sure when their mother's birthday is – so plan a party anyway.

9.00 Grantchester. The village is rocked by a series of armed robberies. Leonard witnesses the first raid and is able to identify one of the criminals – only for the man in question to turn up dead.

10.00 ITV News; Weather.

10.20 Peston on Sunday. Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston. Allegra Stratton presents a guide to the latest issues on social media. (R)

11.20 Premiership Rugby Union. Highlights of the final round of top-flight fixtures, which included Wasps v Saracens, Northampton Saints v Harlequins, and Bristol v Newcastle Falcons.

12.15 Lethal Weapon. (R) **1.05** Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK.

CHANNEL 4

6.15 The King of Queens. (R) **6.40** The King of Queens. (R) **7.05** The King of Queens. (R) **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Eat the Week. **1.30** The Simpsons. (R) **2.00** The Simpsons. (R) **2.30 Film:** Ghostbusters II. (1989) Supernatural comedy sequel, starring Bill Murray. **4.40** World's Most Expensive Cars. **5.40** George Clarke's Old House, New Home. (R)

6.35 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Escape to Costa Rica. Gaia Vince visits Central America's largest hydroelectric dam and the exclusion zone of an active volcano and discovers how Costa Rica has harnessed one of nature's most destructive forces to provide electricity. She also goes white-water rafting to a remote eco-lodge and helps to build artificial reefs from unlikely recycling materials.

8.00 Film: Captain America: The First Avenger. (2011) A puny but brave volunteer is rejected for military service during the Second World War. He becomes the test subject for an experiment that transforms him into the ultimate soldier, and battles against a secret Nazi society plotting to harness the powers of a mystical artefact. Superhero adventure, with Chris Evans, Hugo Weaving, Hayley Atwell and Tommy Lee Jones.

10.25 Film: Prometheus. (2012) A spacecraft travels to another world in search of aliens that may have created the human race. Ridley Scott's sci-fi thriller, with Noomi Rapace and Michael Fassbender.

12.45 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. The Greek at the Harbour restaurant in California. (R) **1.35** Millionaires' Mansions: Designing Britain's Most Exclusive Homes. The private world of luxury interior design in London. (R) **2.25** The Break Up. Cameras follow a relationship's break up. (R) **3.15** KOTV Boxing Weekly. Jorge Linares v Anthony Crolla. **3.40** Gillette World Sport. With Maxence Parrot and David Villa. **4.10** Mobil 1 The Grid. (R) **4.35** Shipping Wars UK. Dave and Jenny transport a handcrafted rowing boat. (R) **5.05** Location, Location, Location. Revisiting two couples who wanted a new home and business. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Mr Men. **6.10** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.15** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.20** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.25** Wissper. (R) **6.35** Paw Patrol. (R) **6.45** Bob the Builder. (R) **7.00** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.10** Olly the Little White Van. **7.15** Olly the Little White Van. **7.20** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.30** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **7.55** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.15** Wissper. (R) **8.25** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.40** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.05** Little Princess. (R) **9.20** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.25** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.30** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.40** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.30** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **10.55** Caught on Camera. (R) **11.25** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.20** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.20 Film:** Cats & Dogs. (2001) Comedy, starring Jeff Goldblum. **3.00** Puppies Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **4.00** Cats Make You Laugh Out Loud 3. (R) **5.00 Film:** Journey 2: The Mysterious Island. (2012)

7.00 Cricket on 5. England v Ireland. Highlights of the second contest in the two-match series, which took place at Lord's. This was the eighth overall meeting in this format of the game between these nations, and just the second to take place on English soil, following quickly from the first encounter at The Brightside Ground in Bristol last Friday.

8.00 Football on 5: The Championship. Action from the final round of regular-season fixtures, including Nottingham Forest v Ipswich Town, Brentford v Blackburn Rovers, and Bristol City v Birmingham City.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 When Magic Goes Wrong. Illusions that went spectacularly badly, including stories of magicians' brushes with death, as well as mishaps involving Dynamo, Paul Daniels and David Blaine. (R)

10.00 Comedy Gold: TV's Funniest Ever Sketches. Compilation of classic comedy sketches from TV's most popular stars.

11.25 Football on 5: The Play-offs. Action from the League One play-off semi-finals, as the teams battled for a place in the play-off final at Wembley Stadium on Saturday 20 May.

12.05 Film: Bangkok Dangerous. (2008)
1.45 SuperCasino. **3.10** Top 20 Funniest. **4.00** Criminals: Caught on Camera. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 The Birth of British Music **8.00** The Secret Life of the Motorway **9.00** Betroffenheit from Sadler's Wells **10.50** Seven Ages of Starlight **12.20** The Story of Maths **1.20** The BBC at War **2.20** Britain's Nuclear Secrets: Inside Sellafield **3.20** Close

ITV2
11.20 Take Me Out **12.40 Film:** Mr Magorium's Wonder Emporium (2007) **1.40** FYI Daily **1.45 Film:** Mr Magorium's Wonder Emporium (2007) **2.30 Film:** Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous (2005) **3.30** FYI Daily **3.35 Film:** Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous (2005) **4.45** Britain's Got Talent **6.00** Britain's Got More Talent **7.05 Film:** Evan Almighty (2007) **8.05** FYI Daily **8.10 Film:** Evan Almighty (2007) **9.00** Take Me Out – The Gossip **10.00** Family Guy **11.30** American Dad! **12.25** The Cleveland Show **1.25** The Vampire Diaries **2.15** The Hot Desk: Jonas Blue **2.25** Teleshopping **5.55** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
12.00 Film: Columbo: Suitable for Framing (1971) **1.40** A Touch of Frost **3.45** Foyle's War **5.55** Midsomer Murders **8.00** Royal Stories **9.00** Cameraman to the Queen **10.00** Law & Order: UK **12.05** Wire in the Blood **2.05** Lewis **3.45** May the Best House Win

ITV4
11.15 Live British Touring Car Championship. **6.20** Football Rivalries **6.30** Pawn Stars **7.00** Fishing Impossible **8.00** Premiership Rugby Union **9.00** Car Wars **10.00 Film:** Unforgiven (1992) **11.00** FYI Daily **11.05 Film:** Unforgiven (1992) **12.40** British Superbike Championship Highlights **1.45** BRDC Formula 3 Championship Highlights **2.45** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
1.30 Brooklyn Nine-Nine **2.00** New Girl **2.30** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **2.40** The Big Bang Theory **4.40 Film:** The Spy Next Door (2010) **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **10.00** Tattoo Fixers **12.05** Rude Tube: Love Bytes **1.10** First Dates **2.15** E4's Tattoo Artist of the Year **3.05** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **3.50** Hollyoaks

Film4
1.00 Gulliver's Travels (2010) **2.35** Rugrats Go Wild (2003) **4.10** The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (2010) **6.20** The Karate Kid (2010) **9.00** A Million Ways to Die in the West (2014) **11.15** Magic Mike (2012) **1.30** The Runaways (2010) **3.45** Close

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PICK OF THE WEEK

FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Parker, Channel 5, 11.05pm
A thief is betrayed and left for dead by his partners in crime. He learns they are planning a diamond heist in a wealthy neighbourhood, so poses as a millionaire wanting to buy a house in the area. A real-estate agent sees through the disguise and helps him get even by stealing the gems from his gang. Action thriller, with Jason Statham and Jennifer Lopez. (2013)

TUESDAY
Bone to Pick: Teagarden Mystery, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Librarian sleuth Aurora Teagarden inherits a house when her friend unexpectedly dies and discovers her new home has a skull hidden in a window seat. Mystery, starring Candace Cameron Bure, Peter Benson and Dave Collette. (2015)

WEDNESDAY
Home, BBC1, 11.45pm
A British family leave their home for what at first appears to be a holiday, but their trip soon turns out to be a very different kind of journey. Short drama, starring Jack O'Connell and Holliday Grainger. (2016)

Win a Date with Tad Hamilton!, Friday, BBC1, 11.55pm

THURSDAY
My Family's Secret, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A man attempts suicide, leaving a cryptic note claiming he may have caused his sister's death. His wife goes back to his home town in search of answers and asks his brother for help. She does not realise her brother-in-law has a split personality, and digging up the past brings out his more dangerous aspects. Thriller, starring Nicholle Tom and Dylan Neal. (2010)

FRIDAY
Win a Date with Tad Hamilton!, BBC1, 11.55pm
A screen idol's reputation is damaging his career, so his manager comes up with a plan to rehabilitate the actor's public image by giving ordinary women across America the chance to win a date with him. The prize eventually goes to a supermarket checkout girl – much to the annoyance of her best friend, who has secretly carried a torch for her for years. Romantic comedy, with Kate Bosworth and Topher Grace. (2004)

Judges John and Gregg have served up a treat for the final

MasterChef fans are a loyal lot. It's genuinely accepted these days that the show only becomes compulsive viewing in the final week, so top marks if you've managed to stay the course again throughout its 12th series.

At least there have been plenty of variety in the tasks, as increasingly svelte pudding-king Gregg Wallace and sidekick John Torode have gone about their business whittling down the original 64 contenders.

There have been Calling Cards, Invention Tests, Critic's Meals and Chef's Tables, as well as heats, knockout weeks, team relays and trips abroad.

Some would say it's almost as confusing as the cooks' complicated dishes.

This week has already been a gruelling one for the finalists attempting to bake, fry, steam, roast and boil their way to success.

On Monday, the remaining five went to Winfield House, the official residence of the US ambassador to the UK, where they had just four hours to serve a five-course dinner with an American theme for the diplomat and his guests, under the watchful eye of Michelin-starred chef Paul Ainsworth.

Then on Wednesday, the surviving four embarked on a culinary adventure in South Africa, where their skills will be pushed to the limit in three demanding tests involving a braai (a traditional South African barbecue), a lunch service at The Test Kitchen, ranked as one the world's top 25 restaurants, and a dinner fit for Cape Town's cultural and culinary elite.

Then last night, the chefs were whittled down again as they faced the toughest challenge of the competition – the Chef's Table.

First, they were out to impress judges Wallace and Torode with a classic dish that bears their own personal stamp.

Then the remaining trio got the chance to cook a three-course lunch menu alongside modern culinary legend Sat Bains at his two-Michelin-starred restaurant in Nottingham.

However, to add to the pressure, a table of the UK's finest chefs – Shaun Rankin, Steve Groves, Tom Kitchin, Paul Ainsworth, Ashley Palmer-Watts and Clare Smyth – were waiting with knives and forks in hand to sample their efforts.

Tonight, the formidable seven-week contest reaches its climax and the finalists are pushed to the limit one last time.

This is their chance to show everything they have learned, and over three hours demonstrate what sort of cook they have become.

They must produce three exceptional courses, push the culinary boundaries and give the judges an awe-inspiring tasting.

Then it's over to Wallace and Torode to decide which of the trio deserves to succeed last year's victor Jane Devonshire and be crowned MasterChef Champion 2017.

Despite MasterChef the series being a slog at times, this final should, like any mouthwatering starter dish, leave fans wanting more.

John Torode and Gregg Wallace in MasterChef: The Finals, Friday, BBC1, 8.30pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Inside the Gang: Young Blood
Channel 5, 9pm
On some of Britain's toughest estates, gangs are increasingly a way of life. But just what does being a member involve, and what happens to the recruits who decide they want out? Those are the questions at the heart of the first edition of a new series, which sets out to expose the truth about British gangs. Veteran members, known as 'olders,' reveal how younger members are attracted by the lure of money, girls and flash cars, only to find themselves being used to sell drugs and carry out acts of violence. But some of these 'olders' are shocked by just how far the new generation is prepared to go.

Little Boy Blue
ITV, 9pm
With the dream team of writer Jeff Pope (one of the brains behind Philomena and Cilla) and star Stephen Graham on board, this has turned into one of the most compelling dramas of the year. And this week's offering does little to diminish its impact. When potential witness Claire Olssen is intimidated into changing her statement, the investigation team look for alternative ways to reinforce their case. As Steve returns to work, Kelly is offered a deal that tests his resolve. Sinead Keenan also stars.

TUESDAY
Elizabeth I: Battle for the Throne
Channel 5, 9pm
Many big stars have played Elizabeth I, from Bette Davis to Helen Mirren, Judi Dench to Cate Blanchett, Quentin Crisp to Glenda Jackson and beyond. Now model-turned-actress Lily Cole is taking on the mantel of Good Queen Bess in this three-part docudrama; Suzannah Lipscomb and Dan Jones present the documentary parts. The first edition focuses on Elizabeth's early life, which saw her declared illegitimate, banished from court and frozen out of Henry VIII's life following the beheading of her mother, Anne Boleyn. She was then third in line to the throne; the premature deaths of her half-siblings Edward and Mary paved the way for her coronation at the age of 25 - her road to the crown had been a rocky one, and there were other obstacles looming on the horizon.

WEDNESDAY
Quadruplets and Homeless
Channel 4, 10pm
After 10 years of trying to have a child together, Aynur and Tony are surprised to hear the news they have four coming along all at once. With quadruplets on the way and no home of their own, the couple move in with Aynur's supportive, traditional Turkish parents. Although they do not always see eye to eye, Tony is determined to prove to her family that he will be committed when their new arrivals are born, despite his struggles with alcohol.

Little Boy Blue, Monday, ITV, 9pm

THURSDAY
The Truth About Sleep
BBC1, 9pm
Medical journalist and chronic insomniac Michael Mosley journeys into the world of sleep, finding out what it is and what happens to someone if they do not get enough. Michael seeks to discover whether his own insomnia runs in the family, sending off a blood sample for DNA analysis, and meets Dr Eleanor Scott in Leeds who is doing research into a possible link between Type 2 diabetes and lack sleep.

Born to Kill
Channel 4, 9pm
With Sam's father released from prison, Jenny makes a desperate effort to get to the bottom of her son's increasingly dangerous behaviour. But she fears she may be too late. Conclusion of the gripping psychological thriller about a seemingly normal teenager whose dark desires start to emerge after he discovers the truth about the father he believed was dead, starring Romola Garai, Jack Rowan, Richard Coyle, Daniel Mays and Lara Peake. Last in the series.

FRIDAY
Inside the Houses of Parliament
Channel 5, 9pm
It's one of Britain's most iconic buildings, but a lot of people are too distracted by the squabbling and occasional scandals that goes on inside Westminster to pay much attention to the structure itself. Here, cameras explore the corridors of power to uncover a maze of secret rooms and hidden worlds that contain the beating heart of the British state. But while the Houses of Parliament may look imposing, they have also been exposed to two centuries worth of British weather and pollution. The programme reveals how the leaking roof and crumbling walls could take 40 years to repair.

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DATE	DAYS	
15/5	5	Dover/Canterbury
15/5	5	Eastbourne (more dates)
20/5	5	Great Yarmouth
22/5	5	Cornwall (Looe)(more dates)
22/5	6	Highland Railways
29/5	5	Ilfracombe
5/6	4	Tenby (more dates)
5/6	5	Bournemouth (more dates)
5/6	5	Warners Thornsby Hall
12/6	5	Isle of Wight (more dates)
16/6	4	Paignton/Torquay (more dates)
22/6	5	Sidmouth (more dates)
26/6	5	Babbacombe
26/6	5	Weston Super Mare (more dates)
01/7	8	Weymouth (more dates)
3/7	5	Scarborough

DATE	DAYS	
9/7	6	Durham and Northumbria
14/7	5	Falmouth
19/7	5	Llandudno (more dates)
23/7	7	Scotland Fort William
31/7	5	North Devon Bideford
31/7	5	Isle of Scilly
11/8	3	Liverpool and Merseyside
26/8	6	Ireland The Giants Causeway
3/9	5	Suffolk Village
25/9	5	Criccieth
29/9	5	Isle of Man
10/10	8	Channel Islands
2/12	2	Bath Christmas Market
9/12	3	Thursford Spectacular

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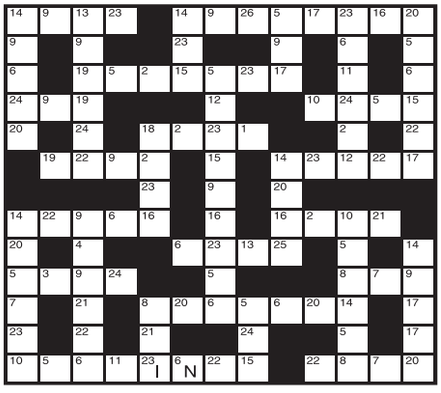
BRAIN GYM

No.428

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



1	14
2	15
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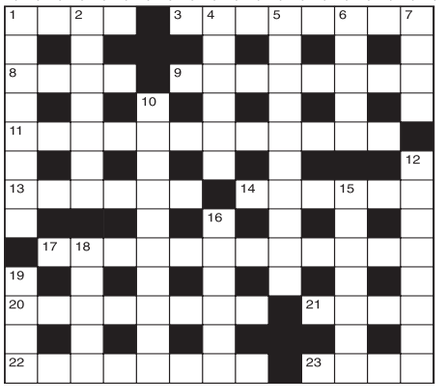
LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
D	P	C	M	L	J	E	O	G	T	Y	U	W
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Q	N	K	A	B	I	V	X	R	H	F	Z	S

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. Even well-done steaks are nowadays! (4)
3. Strung up (8)
8. Forbid a rigged vote (4)
9. American prison with emphasis on harmony? (4-4)
11. Wait to start a game of ping-pong? (5,2,5)
13. Native found in bed (6)
14. Amuse touchingly (6)
17. They often invite you to their houses (6,6)
20. A diet put out for fitness (8)
21. Song needs a tuneful backing (4)
22. Indeed not all went (8)
23. The advantage being sharp gives one? (4)

Down

1. The last thing those taking exams should do (8)
2. Sends back the proceeds (7)
4. They raise this so awkwardly (6)
5. Impressions of some artists (10)
6. Not only soldiers may be bored by it (5)
7. Appreciates accommodation (4)
10. He does well with his money (10)
12. Picture which has a main theme (8)
15. Relatively gentle colour? (7)
16. Has it a piercing eye? Just the opposite (6)
18. Beg to put off retirement (3,2)
19. Music circle (4)

Quick Clues:

Across

1. Slender (4)
3. Boiling vessel (8)
8. Spindle (4)
9. Likely (8)
11. Irresistible (12)
13. Oppose (6)
14. Unchanging (6)
17. Showed (12)
20. Detached (8)
21. Nothing (4)
22. Thwarts (8)
23. Cosy (4)

Down

1. Coastline (8)
2. Malady (7)
4. Missiles (6)
5. Scientific workroom (10)
6. Redbreast (5)
7. Require (4)
10. Bishops (10)
12. Precipitately (8)
15. To and from (7)
16. Agree (6)
18. Call forth (5)
19. Flaccid (4)

Sudoku

		8				1	6	
			8	6		3		
6	3				5		9	2
		9			6		5	
			1		7			9
8	5		4			2		
1	2				4		3	8
		3		1	2			
	4	5				9		

Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

2	7	9	1	5	8	3	6	4
8	3	1	4	9	6	2	7	5
6	5	4	7	3	2	8	9	1
9	1	2	3	6	4	5	8	7
5	6	8	2	1	7	9	4	3
3	4	7	5	8	9	6	1	2
1	8	3	6	7	5	4	2	9
7	2	6	9	4	3	1	5	8
4	9	5	8	2	1	7	3	6

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Infantryman; 9 Invoice; 10 Asset; 11 Helot; 12 Extract; 13 Escort; 15 Spinal; 18 Senegal; 20 Token; 22 Overt; 23 Whereas; 24 Temperately. Down: 2 Novel; 3 Aviator; 4 Thebes; 5 Yeast; 6 Abstain; 7 High tension; 8 Stateliness; 14 Concede; 16 Patient; 17 Flower; 19 Get-up; 21 Kneel.
QUICK - Across: 1 Information; 9 Retreat; 10 Refer; 11 Sides; 12 Nominal; 13 Chosen; 15 Assess; 18 Treason; 20 Eaten; 22 Orate; 23 Express; 24 Free and easy. Down: 2 Noted; 3 Oversee; 4 Mutiny; 5 Thrum; 6 Offence; 7 Prosecution; 8 Artlessness; 14 Open-air; 16 Steeple; 17 Unseen; 19 Sieve; 21 Tress.

Quiz

1. What was Charles Sherwood Stratton's nickname?
2. In which religion are the Veda the most sacred scriptures?
3. Where did Body Shop's Anita Roddick open her first shop?
4. Who wrote the musical Oliver!?
5. Of what is the predatory crown-of-thorns a variety?
6. Which North African capital is known in Arabic as Tarabulus al-Gharb?
7. What type of creature is a mara?
8. Over how many days is a decathlon held?
9. Which 1930s film star married three oil millionaires?
10. In which county is the village of Stilton?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 An insect; 2 Poland; 3 Spike Milligan; 4 Thomas Stamford Raffles; 5 Sea of Galilee; 6 Basil Hume; 7 Laurens van der Post; 8 Vesuvius; 9 William the Conqueror; 10 Verona.

Niner: REICHSTAG

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

15338174	gives a flower,
926642	gives a plant,
159124789	gives a weed.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Inside story – The Belfry Hotel and resort lobby

And relax – the indoor pool and spa at The Belfry

The sweeping entrance and lovely gardens at The Belfry hotel

Choice of three golf courses

This is luxury – par excellence

FROM the minute you drive up the winding driveway to The Belfry you are struck by the luxury and class of this hotel and resort.

A chandelier of golf clubs provides a dramatic entrance to The Belfry's reception and that's before you take in the Brabazon Bar in its art deco style.

Our 10-year-old son has taken up golf and keen to do things as a family we decided to try our hand at the sport.

It was with this new and shared interest in a 'frustrating but fun' sport that we thought we would visit The Belfry at Wishaw, near Sutton Coldfield. Just an hour's drive from home you could say that it is virtually on our doorstep.

The Belfry is synonomous with golf and has been home to the Ryder Cup four times – it has played host to more Ryder Cup matches than any other venue in the world.

Our family room had a balcony overlooking the stunning Brabazon course. Its manicured greens and majestic fairways have challenged the biggest legends of the golfing world.

By Lisa Bailey

It was glorious to be able to stand on the balcony and look out at this iconic course.

We started the day with a family lesson at the PGA Golf Academy – it's the only PGA branded golf academy in England.

The academy was a hive of activity and we were swept away by senior PGA coach Derek Simpson to our session in one of the five individual custom fitting suites. An hour flew by with Derek giving us a masterclass on our swing – watching and then videoing our technique in detail.

Our posture and swing were compared to Tiger Woods (a tad unfair I think!), but it was so interesting to see how all three of us performed. Derek was professional and his great sense of humour kept us entertained and enthusiastic.

The hour's lesson was a warm up for our game later in the day. The Belfry has three courses – Brabazon as mentioned, the PGA National which has hosted two European tour events and The Derby.

The Derby is a parkland course and is perfect for players of all levels. As beginners it was the course for us. A little daunted at first, we teed off and thoroughly enjoyed the nine holes we played of the 18-hole tree-lined course. Described as a gentle challenge, it posed more of a difficult task for the three of us.

The class of the hotel is on a par with the fantastic golf courses. It seems to cater for all. For families it has the indoor pool, woodland walk and The Belfry's Ryder Legends Mini Golf course – a 12-hole course inspired by the legendary Ryder Cup courses.

Classics

For couples there is the luxury spa with treatments and the unique experience of Fire & Ice featuring 12 bio-thermal rooms. There is also the AA Rosette restaurant The Ryder Grill, where you can enjoy a la carte dining and stunning views of the golf course while watching the open plan kitchen.

And, if you are there for business, there are 22 conference and event rooms, as well as the golf, restaurants, bars, a nightclub and spa. In 2013, The Belfry underwent a £26 million renovation. Further work has since been carried out to the spa and other areas of the four-star hotel and resort.

Food at the resort can be either casual or a la carte in The Ryder Grill. Rocca's Pizza Pasta Restaurant hit the spot on the first night with a menu of Italian classics. The casual surroundings were ideal with various parties coming in through the evening – most did not seem to be staying at the hotel, but had travelled to the hotel.

Tomato and buffalo mozzarella, stuffed mini calzone and spicy chicken rigatoni were just some of the delicious dishes we had. Our son had his eye on Rocca's Chocolate Amore – a layered chocolate heaven cake – for dessert, but unfortunately he did not leave any room.

From the minute we arrived to the moment we left, service at The Belfry was outstanding. Staff wherever we went were polite and professional, and seemed to go that extra mile. It was also so nice to see younger members of staff were courteous. My husband and I passed comment after our visit that we had not encountered such friendly staff in a large venue before.

The Belfry was a wonderful place to spend family time together.

CAR SHOPPING?

MAKE ROOM FOR MG ON THE LIST.

With the summer holidays finally here, now is the perfect time to treat yourself to that new car you've always wanted. And, with MG Motor UK's unbeatable value-for-money models available in dealerships nationwide, why look anywhere else?

Sporting the famous MG badge, the MG3 Supermini and their first ever SUV, the MG GS, boast style, performance and the latest tech, all for a remarkably affordable price. If a Ford Fiesta or Nissan Qashqai are on your consideration list, MG offers you a great alternative.

The perfect family car, the MG GS, is powered by a punchy 1.5 turbo petrol engine. It comes in three trim levels and starts from just £15,095 – that's almost a massive £4,000 cheaper than an entry level Qashqai. Available in a range of six striking colours, with spec and tech to match, its roomy interior is great for families who need a vehicle with acres of luggage space. While the MG GS is remarkably spacious up front, the reclining seats also provide more head and legroom than many of its rivals.

Meanwhile, the MG3 Supermini is a great all-rounder that's perfect for younger drivers with its low insurance group rating. Unlike many cars in its class, space is not compromised in the front or rear of the MG3, which can comfortably carry five, 6ft adults – amazing for a top-rated Supermini!

The MG3 allows you to make your own mark – thanks to a wide range of colour schemes and funky graphics packs. Available in four variants – starting from just £8,695, the MG3 is an impressive £4,000 cheaper than a Ford Fiesta.

Both the MG3 and MG GS are now available with 0% financing and offer remarkable value for savvy drivers. To illustrate the point, look at it this way; you could either buy a Qashqai or Fiesta, or drive away in a brand new MG equivalent, which leaves you enough cash to afford a five star Caribbean holiday* every year for four years. And with three and five year warranties on the MG3 and MG GS respectively, opting for an MG makes perfect sense!

For more information about MG's latest special offers or to find your local dealer, visit mg.co.uk

*Thomson Holidays – Royalton Hideaway, St Lucia, all-inclusive week long break, based on two adults sharing (£978pp).

MG3 fuel consumption: URBAN 41.7 mpg | 6.8 l/100km, EXTRA URBAN 59.6 mpg | 4.8 l/100km, COMBINED 51.5 mpg | 5.5 l/100km, CO2 Emissions: 124g/km. MG GS fuel consumption: URBAN 36.6 - 37.6 mpg | 7.7 - 7.5 l/100km, EXTRA URBAN 53.2 mpg | 5.3 l/100km, COMBINED 45.5 - 46.3 mpg | 6.2 - 6.1 l/100km, CO2 EMISSIONS 139 - 141 g/km.

Models shown : MG GS Exclusive with metallic paint in Spiced Orange at £20,090 and MG3 3Style+ in Newton Black with White Trophy Stripe graphics pack and white wing mirror caps at £12,045.40. †On the road (OTR) price of £8,695 applies to the MG3 3Time with no optional extras and £15,095 applies to the MG GS Explore with no optional extras. OTR prices include VAT where applicable, vehicle first registration fee, delivery, number plates and 12 months' "Vehicle Excise Duty'. From prices exclude optional metallic paint, accessories and graphics packs. Fuel consumption values shown are based on official EU test figures and are to be used as a guide for comparative purposes and may not be representative of actual driving results. Offer terms and conditions apply:

*0% APR: Conditional sale. 0% APR available on all MG3 and MG GS models until 30.06.2017. A minimum deposit of 20% of the cash OTR price applies on all MG3 models and 30% of the cash OTR price applies on all MG GS models. Finance by MG Financial Services, a trading style of GMAC UK plc, PO Box 6666, Cardiff CF15 7YT, subject to status, availability and terms and conditions. Applicants must be aged 18 or over at participating dealers. See your local dealer or visit mg.co.uk/offers for details.

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Stourbridge Chronicle Thursday, May 4, 2017

There's a 10 model line-up for the latest Rio, Kia's previous best-seller in the UK

Can Kia's 'big little car' be a big hit?

By Graham Breeze

Globally the Rio is Kia's best seller so will the introduction of an all-new 1.0litre model make the car a big hit in the UK?

The company described the fourth generation model as a "big little car", featuring an amazing new turbocharged one litre petrol engine at the head of a 10-model line-up. I've been boring friends, family and readers about the brilliant range of one litre engines on the market and Kia bosses have also recognised the importance of getting in on the action, determined to carve out a bigger slice of the B-sector cake.

With the range you'd be hard pressed not be overjoyed by the performance of the Rio 3 which comes with a 1.0litre T-GDi 99bhp engine, producing a top speed of 115mph, reaching 60mph in 10.3 seconds, with average fuel consumption over 60mpg and C02 emissions of just 102g/km.

That means it's just £30 to licence.

The 1.0-litre T-GDi engine is offered in Rio for the first time and heads a seven-strong powertrain line-up which shows improvements in fuel efficiency and CO2 emissions over the outgoing Rio.

The cabin is dominated by a large touchscreen

Just as I have been with Ford and Suzuki variations on the one litre theme I am completely gobsmacked at the gutsy performance of this offering from Kia and as a layman can only marvel at the technology behind such performance.

For the more technical reader out there it's an example of Kia's advanced engine technology capabilities through downsizing, turbocharging, direct fuel injection and weight reduction, with a number of detailed engineering solutions to minimise throttle lag and reduce internal friction.

But it's not all about what's under the bonnet because the Rio is a sharper looking car now, with a wider "tiger-nose" front grille, reshape headlights which incorporate impressive cornering lights and automatic main-beam dipping.

The new Rio is bigger too. There's a longer wheelbase, bonn et and front overhang and a lower roofline. There's also more shoulder room but although rear legroom has been increased it's still on the tight side in the back.

There's 13 per cent more boot room with the lifting back door opening to reveal 325 litres of space – just enough for the golf clubs.

There's still a lot of plastic inside the cabin which is dominated by a large touchscreen which incorporates Kia Connected Services and Android Auto and Apple CarPlay smartphone integration with access to the car's navigation and infotainment systems, and live traffic updates, weather reports and fixed speed camera locations.

In manual format the 1.0litre GTDi Rio has an intelligent Stop & Go (ISG) system to eliminate tailpipe emissions and a five-speed manual gearbox as standard.

There's no skimping when it comes to protecting driver and passengers, with a stiffened body shell to enhance crash safety while the front, rear and side crumple zones absorb impact energy. There's also a raft of other safety features including Electronic Stability Control and Vehicle Stability Management ,Autonomous Emergency Braking and a Lane Departure Warning system fitted as standard.

Rio comes with a seven-year/100,000-mile warranty covering all labour and parts except those subject to normal wear and tear. The warranty is transferable if the car is sold before the time/mileage limit expires.

The all-new Rio is also available with Care-3 and Care-3 Plus servicing packages for retail customers. These cover the cost of all routine servicing work for three or five years and, like the warranty, can be passed on if the car is sold before they expire.

Prices start at £11,995 though the 1.0litre G-TDi tested sells at £16,295 which is still a lot of money but competitive in the B-sector.

Will it be a UK success? Well only time will tell but no-one can doubt just how far the Kio Rio has come in the last few years.

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TELEPHONE FRED FOR A RELIABLE AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE
Fully insured
Free quotes and advice on:
07904 441412 - DAYTIME
01384 572371 - AFTER 6PM

MB electric
All domestic and commercial electrical works undertaken
Home rewiring from £800
For a high quality local service call :
01384 660398
07939 503905
mbelectric.co.uk

Local Specialists

Our Specialist Section offers you a wide range of local businesses and tradesman to deal with your needs and requirements.

To advertise your business and reach more than 56,000 potential customers...

1. Call us on... 01384 399901
2. E-mail us at... sue.jones@expressandstar.co.uk
3. Post to... Sue Jones, Stourbridge Chronicle, 3 Market Street, Stourbridge DY8 1AB

ClassifiedAds

Buy Local, **Sell** Local

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FreeAds

IT'S FREE IT'S EASY

For items up to **£250**

VISIT:

bookanad.expressandstar.co.uk

Simply press the free ad icon.
Sorry, no pets, guns or livestock.
Private advertisers only.

Place a paid for advert

By Phone 01902 317878
8.30am - 5.30pm Mon - Fri.
Closed Sat/Sun and Bank Holidays

Online
bookanad.expressandstar.co.uk

In person
At your local Express & Star Office. Cancel/amend, call before 3.00pm Monday - Friday for the next day's advertisement or also before 3.00pm Friday for Monday's advertisement.

funeral directors

J.T. BROOKES
Independent family run Funeral Directors
24 hour service
Brierley Hill 01384 77098
Kingswinford 01384 296683
Hagley 01562 888041
www.nedowning.co.uk

Wombourne Funeral Services & Monumental Masons
For your nearest branch call 01902 892635
wombournefuneralservices.co.uk

religious notices

christadelphian

BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT MANKIND Created by God, not evolved by chance, May 7, at 6pm, The Community Centre, High Street, Kingswinford, Or write to The Dawn (ref:KCE) 5 Station Road, Carlton, Notts. NG4 3AT for free information pack or ring 01384 886544 for recorded message.

1 Family

elderly & disabled

MOBILITY GO CHAIR, immaculate, never used outside, with new batteries charger, £250. Can deliver. 07769 715038.

MOBILITY SCOOTER 4 wheeled with rear shopping trolley, new batteries, rain cover, excellent condition, £280. 01902 759153.

MOBILITY SCOOTER TGA Eclipse foldable suitable for car boot as new cost £750 with16 months guarantee £575 ono 01902 373340

WREKIN STAIRLIFTS reconditioned lifts from £799. New available. 01952 405397/07897 273617

2 Leisure Time

bikes

UNIVERSAL FOLD UP Bike, Ladies Raleigh, 26ins wheel, 1950's sturmy archer gears, need tyres. Offers 01902 783416.

car boot sales

BEST SUNDAY BOOTSALE
Only £5 per Car/Van.
7AM START. Cocksparrow Lane, Cannock WS12 4PB
07890 267 041

ASHWOOD CAR BOOT Sundays from 6am. By Roberts Farm Shop on A449, DY6 0AA. 07710 644908. www.ashwoodcarboot.co.uk

BIGGEST SATURDAY BOOTSALE
Catering positions available
A454 Rudge Heath between Wolverhampton and Bridgenorth
By Royal Oak pub island WV6 7EE
07890 267 041

WEDNESDAY BOOT SALE
Now at Ivy House Farm, A461, Springhill, Muckely Corner Lichfield WS14 0BX
SATURDAY BOOT SALE
Boat Lane, Muckley Corner, Lichfield WS14 0BU
07890 267041

caravans / motorhomes

We Want Your Motorhome
Finance Cleared
Fast Secure Payment
Top Prices Paid
Please Call
AEG on 01384 848439 or
Lee Jinks on 07740 895448
www.aegmotorhomes.co.uk

BAILEY RANGER 2000
380 / 2, 2 berth, excellent condition for age, porch awning and everything needed to hook up and go.
£2,500.
0121 5507755.

BAILEY UNICORN CADIZ
2012, excellent condition. Twin fixed beds, Alde central heating system, fridge / freezer, grill and oven, microwave, 16ins TV, motor mover. Many extras including awning.
£14,000 ono.
01902 579290.

DOREMA HACIENDA awning, as new, used once, blue/grey, matching curtains, size 13/SF, 950/975cm. £250 ono. 07904 612854.

LET US SELL YOUR CARAVAN/ Motorhome for you and get the best possible price. Severn Valley Leisure, DY8 4HP. 01384 390183

STATIC CARAVAN
35 X 12, with large decking, 2 bed, 8 berth, on quiet site in Mid Wales, 2 fishing pools, 20 minutes to coast, ground rent included for 2017.
£8,000.
07555 303350.

SWIFT FAIRWAY 590
2006, 6-berth touring caravan, full awning, annex, many extras.
£7,000.
07397 033304.

SWIFT FAIRWAY 550
4berth, 2009, fixed bed/end bathroom, sunroom, all mod cons with motormover and awning plus extras, immaculate condition, £8,000.
01299 253263.

caravans wanted

WANTED ALL CARAVANS
Any age or condition
Also motorhomes wanted.
TOP PRICES PAID
Immediate collection.
CALL THOMAS
07717 280 996
www.tscaravansandmotorhomes.co.uk

£ £ £ IT'S BACK IT'S BACK MIDLANDS BIGGEST CAR BOOT SALE
SELLERS TURN UP FROM 6AM
THIS SUNDAY AND EVERY SUNDAY
Now at Dark Lane, Featherstone WV10 7HT
Just off main A460.
1minute *from J11 M6*
1minute *J1 M54*
6 am-2 pm
All enquiries Tel: 07831 192 116
Or for more information visit
www.gocarbootsales.com

fishing

COARSE FISHING. Day and night ticket, 5 secluded, well developed pools, no bans, contests welcome. Toilets on site. Lower Bromdon Pools, Burwarton, near Bridgnorth. 01584 823649.

music shop

FENDER STRATOCASTER USA 1998 antique ivory body, maple neck, complete with hard case. Unused condition. Halesowen.
£700 ono.
07773 296658.

sports & leisure

WANTED. Exercise bike, must be in good condition and to be delivered in Oldbury area.
0121 293 6133 (after 5pm).

mind, body & soul

massage

THE TANNING ROOMS
Full body massage 30 mins £22, 40 mins £27, 1 hour £37
SHOWER FACILITIES
Call: 01902 782960

holidays

caravan parks

LUXURY HOLIDAY HOME for sale on 5* park. Golf, fishing, bar & restaurant, pet friendly £24,995 inc. 2017 site fees www.pearllake.co.uk 01568 708 326

self catering holidays

BURNHAM-ON-SEA
Self Catering Holiday Apartments
Disabled Facilities
Pet Friendly
01278 794111
www.GoSomerset.co.uk

travel abroad

READERS ARE REMINDED to check with any Advertisers that their holiday costs are fully covered by a recognised bonding or insurance scheme.

what's on

antique fairs

ANTIQUE/ COLLECTORS VINTAGE FAIR
CORNBOW HALL, HAGLEY STREET, HALESOWEN, B63 3AT
FRIDAY 12TH MAY
8.00AM - 4PM - FREE ADMISSION
07783 680 627

3 Home & Services

collectables & memorabilia

QUEEN ANNE dolls house with basement and front steps, fully furnished, decorated and lit, excellent condition, £470. 01384 410882.

furniture

BEAUTIFUL CABINET
Made from Yew in absolutely excellent condition, £150, ono.
01902 700661 After 6pm.

DINING CHAIRS set of 4, dark brown leather, very good condition. £100. 0121 6026576.

KING SIZE BED beautiful and immaculate, 4 drawers, no headboard, buyer collects, cost £780, sell £95. 01902 756222.

LARGE MEDIUM OAK CABINET
3-4 years old, immaculate condition, cost over £800 new, sell £400 ono.
2 bedside cabinets, solid light wood, £60.
01384 571054.

LEATHER CORNER SETTEE. Dark brown with footstool, W210, L200cm. Good condition. £250. 07533 707110.

items for sale

ADVERTISERS ARE REMINDED
That the Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

PAPER CRAFT EQUIPMENT, inc die cutting machine, dies, stamps, £85 ono.
01902 498366.

items wanted

A BEST CASH PRICE

FOR ALL RAILWAY COLLECTIONS
Any gauge or age
Hornby/Bachmann/Bowmans/ Roundhouse/Graham/Farsh/ any live steam. Also Die Cast, Corgi, Dinky, Spot On.
01384 836219 / 07891 713547
thetrainmaster67@hotmail.com

WANTED
ALL MILLITARIA ITEMS FROM WARS WANTED BY COLLECTOR
Swords, medals, helmets etc, single or full items.
German, Japenese, British.
Will collect.
Very good prices paid
07511 500337.

AUTO MEMORABILIA WANTED
SHELL, ESSO, CASTROL ETC
ALSO
GARAGE CLEARANCES
Old Enamel Signs,
Petrol Cans,
Old Jugs,
Classic Car Parts,
Bikes and Motorbikes.
Anything old.
** TOP PRICES PAID **
01384 836219 / 07891 713547

RAYBURN OR AGA cooker wanted, anything considered.
Please call 07790 410036.

READERS ARE ADVISED to carefully consider all of their options before agreeing to the sale of any of their items.

kitchens & bathrooms

COMPLETE MODERN bathroom suite, white, in excelletn condition, £150 ono. 01902 820973.

loans

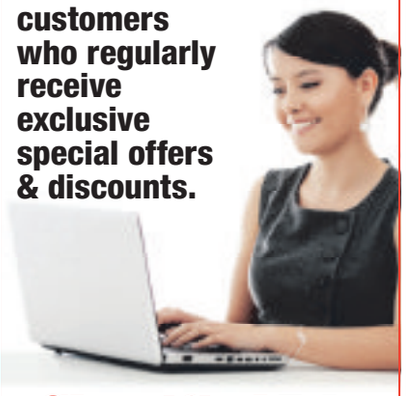
READERS ARE REMINDED that they may require professional advice before entering into obligations.

specialists at your service

alarms/security

PREMIER ALARMS
Supplied and Fitted £195
Servicing and Repairs
12 Months Warranty
All areas covered
All quotes beaten!
Call: 0121 601 9791

BOOK YOUR ADVERTISEMENTS OR FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENTS ONLINE AT
bookanad.expressandstar.co.uk
and become one of hundreds of customers who regularly receive exclusive special offers & discounts.



ClassifiedAds

aerials

AA DIGITAL AERIALS
SATELLITE & CCTV
AERIALS FITTED FROM £75
Work Guaranteed
01902 858191
01384 429166
01543 439095
01922 716029
07833 738857
Checkatrade.com

CHOOSE CLASSIFIED

"I am very pleased with the response I get from my Classified Advertising Contract"
Steve - AA Digital Aerials

For great business results call
01902 319 191
ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

building services

DAVIES & SON BUILDERS
Over 35 years experience in the industry
All aspects of building work including: Extensions, loft conversions, roofing, driveways & landscaping.
Discounts offered.
01902 579592 / 07837 994465

Brickwork Maintenance
Boundary Walls, Steps, Part Rebuilds, Brick Replacement, Repointing, Cleaning etc. CRB, C&G, Insured, Free Quotes.
Lee
0789 147 5718 or 0121 602 5313
lee@blackcountrybrick.co.uk

double glazing

A T S DOUBLE GLAZING
UPVC Doors & Windows
Very competitive prices, family run
FREE QUOTES & OAP DISCOUNTS
01922 442720 or 07783 229386

fencing

CHOOSE CLASSIFIED

"I am extremely happy with the service I get from my Express & Star Classified Sales Representative and I would recommend them to anyone!"
Michael - Portway Fencing.

For great business results call
01902 319 191
ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

ClassifiedAds

PORTWAY FENCING
SPECIAL OFFER
10 Bays of quality fencing, concrete posts, gravel boards £695
Heavy duty panels supplied & fitted.
0121 531 5250 / 07866 137 656
Mon - Fri 8am - 4.30pm
Sat 8am - 12noon
83 Portway Rd, W'bury
DELIVERY AVAILABLE
www.portwayfencing.co.uk

electrical services

STEVE JONES ELECTRICAL Rewires/sockets/fuse boards etc. All domestic and commercial work. 07786 858977/01902 846167.

external rendering / insulation

EXTERIOR RENDERING, full houses, patching, textured/smooth. 40yrs exp. Stuart 01902 324727.

gardening services

GREENALY LANDSCAPES
Fencing Decking
Slabing Turfing
DBS Checked
07956 584523 • 0121 550 1712

GARDENS TIDIED from £5 per garden. 25 years experience. Call 01902 713106 / 07813 184086.

gas fitting

READERS ARE ADVISED
To check that anyone carrying out any Gas work is Gas Safe Registered.
It is an offence under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to carry out gas work in the UK without being on the Gas Safe Register.

house clearances

AJT CLEARANCES
FULL & PART HOUSE CLEARANCES
BEREAVEMENT SPECIALISTS
LICENSED WASTE CARRIERS
01384 732429 / 07752 175707

ABSOLUTELY ANYTHING CLEARED
FULL OR PART, GARAGES AND SHEDS RUBBISH REMOVED WASTE LICENCE
01384 486456 / 07711661135

A ABSOLUTE BEST cash price paid for house clearances and bereavements. Also removals undertaken. 07852 172641 / 07710 360327

painters / decorators

LOVE 2 WALLPAPER
Reliable & Friendly, Professional
Female Painters & Decorators
Attention to detail, competitive prices.
For the Perfect Finish with minimum hassle.
Plastering & Coving Work Undertaken
01384 287577 or 07812 484194
www.love-2-wallpaper.co.uk

A PROFESSIONAL DECORATING service by RC Decorating. Free competitive quotes: 07773 025880.

plastering

M & S PLASTERING & BUILDING Services. Home/Garden Improvements.Mark or Sara: 07741 770897

removals

KT HOUSE REMOVALS
12 years experience.
SINGLE ITEMS TO FULL LOADS.
LOCAL OR DISTANCE. FULLY INSURED.
Free Quotes - Call Ric on:
07771 727119

KINGSWINFORD REMOVALS AND HOUSE CLEARANCES
We move anything.
Professional service,
45 years' experience,
DFS approved and we take the stress away.
Please call:
07966 281957

CALL DEAN NOW: For all your Removal needs. 07429 453209/ 01902 830870 / 01384 940260.

CALL IAN. Man with a large van. No job too small, no distance too far. 07973 628534, 01902 891535.

roofing

A BAD LEAKING ROOF
All Roofing Work Undertaken.
NO JOB TOO SMALL
H. Robinson & Son
07738 976025

rubbish removal

LETS TALK RUBBISH No Skips Needed.Load/Remove any Waste, House Clearance. 07969 628382

skip hire

A.COBRA
LICENSED WASTE CARRIERS
No Skip We Load• Brick and Dirt Removal • Man and Digger Hire
01384 484309
07405 109317

BIG JOHN MOVES RUBBISH! No Skips, we load, fast friendly service, 25 Lister Rd, Dudley DY2 8JR, Est 35 years, 01384 232359.

4 Pets & Animals

equestrian corner

ALL READERS are advised to check if Horses, Donkeys or Ponies have the required Passport information.

guns & dogs

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS
Advertisers must ensure that they meet all necessary legal requirements for owning and using guns.

GAMMO 400 .77 rifle, scope bag, £120. Norica .177 rifle and slip, £60. BSA cadet rifle, £90. Webley MK1 .22 pistol, £120. 01902 743828.

pets corner

GREYHOUNDS MAKE WONDERFUL PETS
All neutered, innoculated and microchipped.
Call 01922 412212 or
www.rgtwolverhampton.co.uk
RGT Wolverhampton
@RGTWolves

NOTICE TO READERS
Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:
1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with it's Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree.
Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

WANTED. Indoor rabbit hutch and playpen, must be in good condition and able to be delivered Oldbury area. 0121 293 6133 (after 5pm).

5 Business & Farming

business opportunities

READERS are recommended to take appropriate professional advice before entering into any obligations.

FULLY EQUIPPED LADIES hairdressing salon for rent, available from May 1, 2017. 01902 455533.

6 Property

accommodation to let

NOTICE TO READERS
It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments/contracts.

DETACHED BUNGALOW Coseley/Bradley, 2 bed, quiet cul-de-sac, £550pcm, refs required. 07392 590772.

properties wanted

TRUSTED. RELIABLE.
WE BUY HOUSES.
Contact Mary on
07767 135 043
01384 686 050
mary@sotaproperties.com

overseas property

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

7 Jobs

full time - general

CV MATCHING. IT'S QUICK, EASY AND FREE
Real opportunities for you
jobs.expressandstar.com
REAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU

Home Cash Buyer
Sell today, sign today, complete when u wish
£££ RENT BACK OPTIONS £££
Houses / Land Required
Ring Paul 24/7 Local 07870 341 089
Sandwell area: Call 0121 696 4154
Walsall & Cannock area: Call 01922 432049
Wolverhampton: Call 01902 489901
www.homecashbuyer.co.uk

Need to sell your home fast?
We can help you make a fresh start
With solutions to suit ...
you can clear your debts and make a fresh start
Purchase Agreed Within 7 DAYS
ALL CIRCUMSTANCES CONSIDERED
COMPLETE ON DATE TO SUIT
FREE VALUATION AND LEGALS
FREE FRIENDLY ADVICE
LOCAL COMPANY
MARION | PROPERTY SOLUTIONS
WHY NOT CALL US TODAY
for an informal, friendly and confidential chat?
01384 930 978 OUR LINES ARE OPEN 24/7
*Terms and Conditions apply

WE BUY ANY HOUSE CASH
CALL US FREE 24 Hours/ 7days
0800 246 1047
CASH ADVANCE WITHIN 24 HOURS
WE OFFER £20,000 CASH ADVANCE
NO Fees & FREE Solicitors
We Buy Any Area & Any Condition
www.ukfastsale.co.uk

CHOOSE CLASSIFIED
"We have been advertising in the Express & Star and Chronicles for over 20 years and consider it a key part of our business with the regular flow of calls, which our advertising generates."
Black Country Homes
For great business results call
01902 319 191
ClassifiedAds Brought to you by Express & Star

CHOOSE CLASSIFIED
"I am really pleased with the response I get from my Classified Advertising!"
Paul Westwood - Home Cash Buyer
For great business results call
01902 319 191
ClassifiedAds Brought to you by Express & Star

Express & Star
FIXED PRICE RECRUITMENT PACKAGE
FILL YOUR NEXT VACANCY WITH OUR BRONZE FIXED PRICE RECRUITMENT PACKAGE
Bronze package includes:
- 5cm x 2 column advert in Express & Star (Thursday)
- 5cm x 2 column advert in Chronicle of your choice
- Two week listing on jobs.expressandstar.com
- 5 line advert to appear in Express & Star Classified jobs for 5 nights
- We will run the lineage and online advert on a daily basis until you fill the vacancy

Package Price £399*
Contact Tracey Thompson on 01902 319645 or email tracey.thompson@expressandstar.co.uk
*All prices are subject to VAT

Customer Advisor

This is a part-time showroom based opportunity to join a progressive company who can offer you a platform to build your career. Ongoing training will be provided.

Call Jonathan: **01384 89 39 29**

Job description: www.avantikb.co.uk/customer-advisor/

Avanti Kitchens Bedrooms & Bathrooms

8 Motoring

cars over £1500

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

MUST BE SEEN

AUDI TT QUATTRO CONVERTIBLE
3.2, petrol, V6 engine, 2005. 82,000 miles.
Excellent condition inside and out.
Silver with navy leather.
Mot April 2018.
£3,999.
01922 864922.

FORD FIESTA 1.25 ZETEC
64 reg, one lady owner, 39,000 miles, 3dr, white, 60mpg plus £30 road tax, excellent condition,
£4,700.
07459 430422.

FORD KA
59 plate, 8 months MoT, FSH, reliable, low tax.
£1,900 ono.
07948 519022.

MERCEDES SLK230
Special Edition, 2002, 40,000 miles, electronic convertible, petrol, automatic, silver, MOT, electric windows, air con,cruise control, leather interior.
£3,950.
07866 580990.

NISSAN MICRA 2013, 8,700 miles, blue, abs, electric windows, air con, long MoT, bluetooth, excellent condition £4,500 ono. 07719 927567.

BARGAIN

RENAULT CLIO
2008.
1.2 Limited Edition Turbo Model.
Half leather, white clocks, keyless ignition, 16 inch alloys, long MoT.
£1,595 ono.
07779 455916.

RENAULT CLIO FREEWAY
2008, 47,000 miles, abs, fsh, long MoT, central locking, pas, alloys, CD, 1149cc.
£1,599.
07879 403302.

LOW MILEAGE

VAUXHALL CORSA 1.2
29k miles, 3dr silver, 1 lady owner, 05 reg, SH, 12 months MoT, good tyres.
Excellent condition.
£1,950.
07751 799795.

VW PASSAT ESTATE SPORT TDi
07 reg.,
50,000 miles,
Service history,
cambelt change,
MoT till May 2, 2018,
very clean.
£2,350
07814 447682.

BARGAIN

WV POLO 1.2
2007, blue,
one previous owner,
57,200 miles,
full MoT,
good condition.
£2,200 ono
01922 445679 /
07815 130824.

cars under £1500

CITROEN C3
1.4 LX, 2002 (52), 99500 Miles, Blue, electric front windows, air bag, MoT end of September, metallic paint, central locking, service history,
£685
01384 277340

FIAT GRANDE PUNTO 1.2 ACTIVE
2007, 71,800 miles, blue, electric windows, alarm, full MoT, new exhaust,
lovely condition, ideal first car.
£1,400 ono
07375 697505.

FIAT PUNTO GRANDE
1.4, 2009, 103,000 miles, red, Lady owner, 2 April 2018 MOT, abs, electric windows, electric mirrors, air con, metallic paint, central locking, pas
£1,495 ono
07949 990640

GOOD RUNNER

FORD MONDEO GLX
1800 PETROL
1997, 83,500 miles, very good condition, full MoT till next April, many new parts.
Very reluctant sale.
£250 ono.
01902 540425.

BARGAIN

PEUGEOT 106 ECO INDPENDENCE
2000 reg.
89k, MoT end of July, very good condition and runner, burnt orange colour.
£190 no offers.
Telephone 07947 518846.

IDEAL FIRST CAR

SUZUKI IGNIS VVT - S
Automatic, 2006, 24,000 miles, 1490cc, petrol, 5-dr hatchback, 2 owners, long MoT.
£1,350 ono.
01902 846863. 07772 695009.

1ST TO SEE WILL BUY

VAUXHALL CORSA SXI 1.2
3 door, 52 reg.
Silver.
Only 65k.
12 months MoT.
Stunning condition.
Only £895.
Telephone 07840 175237.

classic cars

WANTED, CLASSIC Car. Private cash buyer. Any condition, anything considered.
01630 652993 or 07773 462797.

motorbikes

KAWASAKI Z900 green, 1974, nice bike, runs well. £5,500 ono.
07516 632974.

scrap vehicles

OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/metal for cash.

A BETTER PRICE
for scrap or damaged cars and commercials. Spares for sale.
NINE LOCKS VEHICLE DISMANTLERS LTD
Brierley Hill 01384 76566 or 70553. Evenings 75397. DY5 3JZ.

vehicles wanted

alan reed cars
Used cars wanted for cash
Top prices paid. HP settled.
Buyer could call.
01562 711083 / 07831 245313

CROWN MOTORS guarantee best price for your unwanted cars/vans. 07903 549849, buyer will call.

spares & accessories

clutches / brakes / gearboxes

A CLUTCH CHANGE MOBILE
For Example:
Citroen C1, C2, C3
Hyundai 110, Toyota Yaris
Clios & Micras
Ring for quotes on others!
30 yrs experience
ALL AREAS COVERED
Call Bob
01384 251328
07972 169554
anytime

9 Local Information

public & legal notices

LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES
For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to
Marie Hogg on 01902 713146
or email marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk
(remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

10 Personals

personal

MALE
Divorced, late 60's, slimish. Likes sports, DIY, countryside. WLTM slim lady, honest, caring, sincere, for lasting relationship.
Box Number P20793,
Express and Star,
Queen Street,
Wolverhampton,
WV1 1ES.

MEET SEXY local women, genuine adult contacts. fast & discreet. Call 0330 022 6244/07008 026348.

PROFESSIONAL LADY
Looking to meet professional educated male 40-60 years who is honest and caring for friendship/soulmate who enjoys the finer things in life and must be willing to travel.
Box Number P20789 ,
Express and Star,
Queen Street,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

SINGLE MAN 57
Own house but unfortunately doesn't drive a car.
I'm loving, caring and genuine, would like to meet a lady 48 to 60 years for days/nights in or out for Friendship initially, leading to a relationship if compatible, Wolverhampton and surrounding areas only please.
Recent photo would be appreciated.
Box Number P20791 ,
Express and Star,
Queen Street,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

BUY LOCAL SELL LOCAL
01902 317878

Classified Ads

Express & Star DATING

YOUR regional dating service, run by the dating experts who have been established since 1990. ***REAL people in YOUR region***

Try it.. You'll love it!

Dates in ***YOUR*** region

Here's how to use your dating service ...

To ***Place*** your advert call:
0844 381 5936
follow the simple instructions. You will also get ***£10 SMS CHAT CREDIT***

To ***Place*** your ad by text
Simply text **REG** followed by your first name, date of birth, area and your advert (max 155 characters) and send t: **80098** (**FREE** Standard Network rates apply.

To ***Reply*** to members call:
0906 500 3955
calls cost £1.55 per min plus your phone company's access charge.
Have the adverts 6-digit box no written down and do ***key-it-in promptly*** when asked. Don't forget to leave contact details for replies.

To ***Reply*** by text:
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Single Women

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

SUE, 46, confident professional, sporty/active, seeking sensitive interesting guy for intimate evenings in with great food and conversations. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426757**

TAMIKA, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. Pls call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3007 Box 422365**

JOY happily married, bi curious, blonde hair, blue eyes, big boobs, seeks someone to join in a bit of bedroom fun! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426845**

SAMANTHA, 35yrs, attractive brunette with own business, seeks adventurous gent for casual relationship. **Tel: 0906 515 3035 Box 425979**

ANNE blonde hair, blue eyes, seeks males for no strings adult fun! Call and leave a number for me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426843**

JASMINE, 34yrs, non smoking first time dater! Easy going, attractive and hard working. Due to work commitments I'm looking for a no strings companion any age. Looks unimportant must have GSOH. **Tel: 0906 515 3015 Box 426201**

CARIBBEAN woman, 57 years young, medium build, WLTM a nice man, 55-63, for days out socialising, romance, non smoker. **Text only. Mailbox: 5774104**

HARRIETT 42yrs, blue eyed brunette with long lets and decent curves! Looking for a cheeky adventurous man for fun only. I live alone so can accommodate and can travel. Discretion assured. ACA. Give me a try. **Tel: 0906 515 3031 Box 426205**

SARAH, 38, nice looking blue-eyed slim brunette, WLTM similar lonely male for fun times hopefully leading to LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426709**

PIA, Asian lady, 57yrs, very caring and a little subservient and quiet. I am a good cook and loyal friend. Pls text me if you are kind man 55+ **Text Only. Mailbox 4013378**

BRIDGET 48, voluptuous, seductive and very saucy, seeks male for lots of TLC and to make very happy in return. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426839**

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3003 Box 419673**

CHRIS, 40, blue eyed blonde single female, lots of interests, loves travel, beach, nights in/out, looking for mature sincere gent for possible LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426823**

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. **Tel: No: 0906 515 3011 Box: 409715**

JANET tall beautiful brunette, slim 12, separated, enjoys life, no hang-ups, wanting quality time, friendship and possible romance with similar guy. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426807**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906 515 3019 Box: 413399**

DEBS lonely 40's female with no ties, GSOH, N/S, loves the simple things in life looking for similar soul mate to be happy together with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426769**

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3023 Box 421375**

LOUISE, 40s, youthful looking female looking for spontaneous male to put some love and lust back into my life. Call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426321**

CHLOE pretty single female 36yrs, dark hair/eyes, slim build, very lonely and looking for reliable discreet male for mutual companionship maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426079**

JAN, 46, lonely divorced romantic female, brown hair, green eyes, curvy feminine figure, employed, OHAC, WLTM attentive male for TLC. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426255**

PAM, 40, cuddly feminine young looking female, OHAC, financially secure, looking for fun times without complications with likeminded male. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426253**

FARMERS daughter, 69, single, likes heavy horses, animals, meals out, GSOH, friendship only, 65-75. **Text only. Mailbox: 5799589**

KAREN, 52, 5ft5, short browny/blond hair, green eyes, medium build, GSOH, loving, caring and kind, likes to do lots of things, likes a laugh, WLTM similar gent, hope to hear from you soon! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425917**

GENTS, please call me if you are looking to meet a kind sincere lady for nights at the theatre, socialising etc. You can call or text me. I promise to reply, I'm very genuine. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426345**

JACKIE is 54yrs and an attractive easygoing brunette, she's hoping to meet a similar minded chap for some fun, dates, chats, text or call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426343**

ATTRACTIVE blonde lady, 54yrs, loyal, romantic and solvent hoping to meet a gent with GSOH for romance, sensual times and more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426341**

KELLY young attractive vivacious 48yr old lady, loves good food, cosy nights in/out, holidays etc, WLTM male for mutual companionship without ties. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425913**

SUE, 38, petite blonde, curvy size 8, outgoing, cultured, enjoys cosy night cuddles, seeking discreet loving male to make me feel special. Status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426219**

EILEEN mid 60s seeks gent 50s-60s for friendship, possibly much more. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425341**

CHRIS, 40, attractive slim sophisticated redhead, seeking male 30-50's to relax with and get to know. Discretion assured. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426301**

NATALIA, black beauty! I am late 50s but still fit with a good figure and lovely skin and eyes. I would like to meet a nice white gentleman, older than myself for chats, maybe more. **Text Only. Mailbox 4107799**

CATHY, 40s, slim attractive lady with an open-minded attitude to life, and WLTM a man of any age. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426579**

SUSAN, 41, sophisticated, confident, discreet, attractive female seeking professional male over 38 for friendship/relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426557**

KATHERINE 38, attractive, single, very lonely and looking for love, fun and male companionship. pls get in touch. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426595**

KAREN, 46, witty female who loves to laugh, WLTM similar male to share interests, romance, cosy nights in and more. Pls call. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426335**

BROWN eyed female, 66, smoker, likes music, cinema, theatre, meals out WLTM male 67-74 for LTR. **Text only. Mailbox: 5806373**

KELLY young attractive vivacious 48yr old lady, loves good food, cosy nights in/out, holidays etc, WLTM male for mutual companionship without ties. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425913**

SUE 38yrs enjoys most things, meals in/out, easygoing, broadminded, passionate, slightly feisty, looking for adult fun, call me if you're interested in spicing things up. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425587**

DONNA naughty 40's, pretty, loves nights in, gym, theatre, seeks someone to make me laugh, give lots of cuddles and go on fun dates. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425867**

SARA, 43, educated independent attractive female, nervous about dating through advertising, so pls doesn't disappoint me by not replying. I promise I wont disappoint you! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426161**

JANINE 40yrs, very cute petite artistic female who has a real passion for life, WLTM similarly passionate male for tactile LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426125**

JANE, attractive and young looking 60 something lady, active, outgoing with interesting personality, hoping to meet a kind gent for occasional meetings. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425931**

BROWN eyed Brummie female, 66, smoker, likes music, cinema, theatre, meals out, WLTM male 67-74 for LTR. **Text only. Mailbox: 5780679**

Single Men

GENTLEMAN wishes to meet nice lady 45-60, West Midlands area. My interests are meals out, daytrips, music and reading. **Text only. Mailbox: 5817771**

GENUINE Stoke male 50s, friendly and easygoing, enjoys weekends away, seeks slim attractive female 35 to 50 for friendship. **Text only. Mailbox: 5817202**

MARK, single, 6ft, blue eyes, dark hair, lots of interests, sport, music, cinema, long walks, eating out, looking to meet that special lady. If that sounds like you please get in touch! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426461**

CHRISTIAN, 57, 6ft, dark, likes walking, nice meals and socialising, looking for discreet times with a similar fun lady. If you are interested please contact me. I look forward to hearing from you. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425947**

32 year old male looking for a nice lady for fun, maybe more. **Text only. Mailbox: 5831443**

GENT 48, youthful outlook, likes countryside, keep fit, karaoke, seeks soul mate for fun times. N Shropshire. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408411**

YOUNG 60 West Midlands male, 5ft 8ins, grey hair, slim to medium build, sexy Scorpio, GSOH, broadminded, seeking an honest sexy lady for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426621**

MALE N/S, honest, GSOH, car owner, seeks female, 55-70 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416817**

CARING male, 63, N/S, GSOH, genuine likes music, travel, meals out, casual drink, seeks female, 50-70 for friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 416997**

EASYGOING male, 63, genuine, N/S seeks female 50-70 for friendship and romance. Looks unimportant. Likes occasional drink, eating in/out, cinema and driving. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418893**

SINGLE male, n/s, likes music, films, driving, nights in, dining out, trips, WLTM lady, 50-70, looks unimportant, for friendship and relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424927**

MALE, 58, works in agriculture, lives in North Shropshire area, likes the countryside, days at the coast even in the winter, meals out, looking for loving, caring, country girl, 50s-60s. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426037**

SINGLE male, 31 years old, brown eyes, black hair, 6ft, seeks single slim athletic build lady similar age for fun, hopefully more. **Text only. Mailbox: 4765584**

JAY, attractive, 6ft2, single father, loves a laugh and a giggle, looking for a lady for evenings out, company and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424303**

STEVE, 59, sincere and genuine, likes pub meals, country walks and cinema, seeks Chinese, Tia, Black, Asian or Italian lady, looks unimportant but personality is, for friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425831**

I am looking for a lady friend to enjoy my retirement with. I enjoy going out for meals and would like some company. **Text only. Mailbox: 5777872**

ADVENTUROUS 36-year-old male, slim, dark hair, has many interests, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417235**

MARRIED businessman, mid fifties, seeks lady for discreet adult fun. Any age/looks unimportant. **Text only. Mailbox: 5534019**

IRISH male, 62, 5ft 9ins, GSOH, independent, seeks genuine female for friendship initially. Birmingham area. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403623**

MALE, 60, tall and slim, WLTM older female of larger build, any age, any status, for adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425807**

TALL male, 58, seeks larger woman, any age, for discreet fun, married or single. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425643**

GENUINE male, 37, friendly and easygoing, enjoys sport and keep fit, WLTM genuine female 25-45, for friendship/relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420253**

TALL, dark, attractive male, 57, WLTM an attractive female for discreet daytime fun, 25-50. Can travel. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425759**

ATTRACTIVE male, 58, seeks adventurous female, 50-70, for close fun. Any status or size. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425535**

I enjoy the great outdoors with the dog, 36 years old, mature with a caring nature looking for a female age 28-48 for friendship, possible relationship. **Text only. Mailbox: 5803493**

CARING male, 6ft, blue eyes, slim, dark hair, honest, loving, down to earth, likes sport, music, cinema, meals out, seeking special lady. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409803**

IAN, 5ft6, looking for somebody, 18-60, for general good fun times, days out, nights out, meals, sightseeing and visiting various parts of the country. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426437**

MALE 45 6ft, blue eyes, dark hair, slim, likes sports, cinema, meals out, seeking loving, caring female to share life with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406737**

YOUNG 60, West Midlands male, 5ft8, grey hair, wear specs, GSOH, sexy Scorpion, broad minded, slim to medium build, varied interests, seeking a genuine, honest, sexy lady for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426137**

40 year old Hungarian male, 5ft8, slim, dark blond hair, blue eyes, WLTM a lady 30-45 to spend some time together for friendship. **Text only. Mailbox: 5800702**

WILLIAM, young 56, would like some adult fun with a sexy lady, any age, wants and good time and discreet fun. **Text only. Mailbox: 5321154**

MALE, 60s, 5ft10, slim build, looking to meet female, for a mature adult relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426053**

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Penn's Sandeep Dhillon keeps wicket as Springvale's Matt Bennett bats

Wednesbury bowler Sajid Nazir bowls to Matt Axton, at Wednesbury Sports Union and Cricket Club

Paceman Dan Wale will spearhead Pelsall's attack this year

Ex-Pelsall man Steve Blews has joined Hammerwich

Cricket clubs looking to hit their rivals for six

SPORTING MEMORIES

By Jack Bradley

THE Staffordshire Club Cricket Championship Premier Division season has opened up with 12 teams vying for glory.

Milford Hall took the spoils last summer and a place in the Birmingham League, but who will be successful this year? We take a look at the top flight line-up.

Aldridge CC
Captain: Dan Shortland
One to watch: Royeth Hussain

Aldridge go into the season with a new philosophy after a campaign that saw them finish soundly in mid-table in 2016. This summer will see the side line-up with more fresh faces, having done the majority of their recruitment internally by promoting players from their youth team. Captain Dan Shortland believes that approach will prove to be exciting at least. "We are excited really," he said. "We are looking to change the focus of the club as we have lost about five members of the first team. Now we have a lot of younger players stepping up. In particular, this is the year that I am looking forward to seeing the emergence of Royeth Hussain."

Beacon CC
Captain: Daniel Green
One to watch: Tom Bingham

Having finished runners-up for the past two seasons, Beacon will have a new man in charge this summer with Dan Green taking on the lead role. It's an opportunity that Green is relishing, having started his playing days as a youngster at the club. "I am really looking forward to it," he said. "I have played for Beacon since I was a young lad and it is something I always really wanted to do." Green predicts the usual suspects will be in the mix for title glory. "There is the usual teams – Pelsall and Penn are always tough and then teams like Cannock and Hammerwich, who are always towards the top of the table," he said.

Cannock CC
Captain: Will Fleet
One to watch: Adam Benton

What could be considered a new project is being undertaken at Cannock, as the club is trying to develop both on and off the pitch after last season's third-placed finish. The season ahead will still be about developing the club. "We were never really in the mix to get promoted in the end," said skipper Will Fleet. "It was a good experience, though. Now, we are hoping to just make sure we carry on improving the team." Improvement could come in the form of overseas player Nick Trebilcock – a left-handed batsman from New Zealand – while Adam Benton and Matt Cotterill are both tipped to impress by Fleet. Off the pitch, the club also has plans to develop a new clubhouse.

Springvale CC
Captain: Richard Homer
One to watch: Paul Baker

Springvale make their return to the Premier Division after winning Division One. The team were relegated in 2015 but managed to bounce back at the first time of asking. "It's exciting being back in the league – winning the league last year to come back up was a big accomplishment," said captain Richard Homer. "Our main target is staying up this year." Springvale's bid will be aided by the arrival of experienced former Walsall opening batsman Paul Baker and off-spinner David Geran, while Paul Baker who has previously opened the batting at Walsall and is an ex-Birmingham league player will be one to watch for the forthcoming campaign.

Penn CC
Captain: Mark Green
One to watch: Sandeep Dhillon

Penn will be another team going into the campaign with a new captain leading the charge with Mark Green stepping up. Green is relishing the prospect of leading his side – a favourite by many to contend for the title. "It's my first time as captain this year, so hopefully we can push for the title," he said. "It's a strong side and we have added a few players who will come in and help a lot." One of those players is former Himley and Brewood paceman Danny Smith, pictured left, while a more familiar face, Sandeep Dhillon, is the one to watch this season. "Sandeep is opening batsman and he's a strong player with lots of experience from the Birmingham League and in the Staffs League." explained Green.

Hammerwich CC
Captain: John Jennings
One to watch: Ben Novis

Hammerwich will begin their campaign having made three new additions in the bowling department, bringing in Steve Blews, Jamie Holmes and Ben Novis. Coming off the back of a steady season last year in which they finished fourth in the standings, captain John Jennings believes the additions will help push on an already strong side. "We matched any team that we played last year," said Jennings, "The new players will make us stronger this season. We're looking forward to it now, especially as we have brought in these new players."

Pelsall CC
Captain: Danny Pennell
One to watch: Jake Lee

Pelsall will be looking to build on their fifth-place finish, with their relegation hangover no longer looming from the 2015 campaign. The club have gone through a period of transition with players coming and going, but skipper Danny Pennell believes they have added a lot of quality. "It's been quite transitional really but we have brought in four really good players," he said. "Jake Lee, Tom Wright, Dan Wale and and Australian Thomas Gravina have all come in. They bring much more athleticism in the field. There has really been an influx of youth." Regarding 'one to watch' Jake Lee, Pennell believes he is at the right club at the right time to progress.

Rugeley CC
Captain: Scott Gretton
One to watch: Ali Fawcett

Rugeley club captain Scott Gretton has been quick to emphasise the quality of his team before their season-opener against Penn as they look forward to competing in the top flight following last season's promotion. Gretton said: "I'm very excited about the season because it's a very competitive league. We have got people who joined the club last season but could not play due to work commitments now available which will make a difference." Regarding the arrival of Austrlaian overseas player Nathan Timbrell, Gretton added: "He wants to come over here and get some more experience. It is exciting because he has played at a decent standard of cricket in Australia."

Bentley bag cup against Casuals

AFC BENTLEY proved they were up for the cup as they picked up the GA Evans Cup after a 2-0 win against Otter & Vixen in the final at Wolverhampton Casuals. AFC Jacks are favourites to lift the Premier Division title after clocking up their 10th win in 12 league outings. A 2-1 success at Emerald Athletic put Jacks level on points with leaders Diffusion.

Huf UK are still battling for Division One glory. A 6-2 win against All Saints Athletic leaves them five points behind leaders Gospel Oak.Frying Pan Darlaston were 2-0 winners at home to Wednesfield Red Lion while Punjab United Sports crushed Grapes 6-0. Division Two champions Old Bulls Head maintained their unbeaten run with a 3-1 triumph at SWL Spartak.The mid-table clash between Balls to Cancer and Malthouse ended up 2-1 in Malthouse's favour. The race for the Division Three title continued with the top two both tasting success. Andrew Turvey had a four-goal blast as leaders Belgrade turned on the powered to an 8-1 success away to Dynamo 50 Stile. Second-placed Warstones Wanderers marched to a 6-0 win on home soil against Churchill Rovers, while Royal George went down 3-1 to Tettenhall Royal Oak. Wolves Pride boosted their hopes of being crowned Division Four champions breating Ashmore 11-0.

Ex-Albion and Villa man is Cowes boss

FORMER Albion and Villa winger Steve Hunt has been appointed manager of Cowes Sports on the Isle of Wight.

The 60-year-old, who won two caps for England in 1984, was named boss of the ninth-tier team on the last day of the season after they assured their Sydenhams Premier League survival.

Hunt's only previous managerial experience came at Willenhall Town in the late 1980s, although he also worked as a youth team coach for Port Vale and Leicester City.

Cowes Sports FC made the announcement on their Facebook page, saying: "We're delighted to announce that former Coventry, West Brom, Villa and England winger Steve Hunt is our New 1st Team manager. Welcome Steve!"

The Sydenhams Premier League feeds into Southern League Division One South and West.

Until Jake Livermore featured against Germany last month, Hunt held the record as the last West Bromwich Albion outfield player to line up for England.

Early goal and league leaders left lacking

Wolves Women 3 Loughborough Foxes 2

WOLVES Women's last home game of the season gave fans a thrilling 3-2 victory over league leaders Loughborough Foxes.

Wolves made their early pressure pay in the eighth minute as Captain Anna Perks headed home from a Jen Anslow corner. Loughborough got the equaliser in the 17th minute as Cooper slotted the ball past the oncoming Chloe Evans, colliding with her as the ball trickled into the net.

Wolves' hard work paid off in the 36th minute as they regained their lead from a Jodie Bragan header, making it 2-1 at the break. It didn't take long to score again as Bragan headed in her second, and Wolves' third, from a Laura McQuilkin corner. Loughborough' s persistence paid off in the 77th minute as Eastham's shot went over the top of Evans and into the net, making it 3-2 to set up a nervy finale.

Wolves had a penalty appeal waved away in the 85th minute before a shot from Jade Cross which was saved by the keeper.

With Loughborough pressing Wolves maintained their composure and stood firm to record an impressive victory in a thrilling game.

Sport

Dozen line up for start of season

See page 39

Champions are off to a flying start

LEAGUE Champions Berkswell began their bid to retain the title with a six-wicket victory over newly promoted Dorridge who showed impressive form with the bat as they scored 264 for the loss of three wickets in 50 overs.

Warwickshire's Andy Umeed batted throughout the innings for an unbeaten 88, with support from fellow opening batsman Ali Ebad (59) and Mohammed Akeel (42). In reply, a superb unbeaten 100 from 19-year-old Mohammed Ahmed and 80 from Tom Lewis ensured the title favourites were off to a winning start.

Wolverhampton racked up the highest Birmingham League Premier Division total of the day came as they who piled up 287-8 at home to Brockhampton. Zen Malik struck a maiden league century from 91 balls after Amritpal Singh opened up with 76. Despite 65 from Sri Lankan Dinusha Fernando and 50 from Dominic Badger, the Herefordshire side went down to a 53-run defeat.

Kidderminster stumbled to 105 all out against Walsall, at Gorway, where former Old Hill seamer Billy-Jo Cox took 4-21 on his debut for his club. West Bromwich Dartmouth and Knowle & Dorridge both appear to be strong but it was Dartmouth who came out on top by 13 runs at Sandwell Park. The match between Kenilworth Wardens and Ombersley resulted in a resounding nine-wicket win for the visitors after Wardens were restricted to 203 for 7.

Pride of place in Division One is taken by Tamworth, who, in their first ever game at this level, romped to what is believed to be a record winning margin in the top two divisions. Stuart Burrows (101), Jake Flower (80), Joe Clarke (77) and Ben Maddox (50) hit Barnards Green for 392 for six in 50 overs before James Rudge (4 for 13) and Josh Bowker (3 for 23) sent a shell-shocked Barnards Green packing for 44.

DK runner tested by MK marathon's three hour target

THERE was more marathon action at the weekend for athletes from Dudley Kingswinford Running Club at a Bank Holiday date in Milton Keynes.

With many already having posted a decent time over the 26.2 mile distance it was the turn of a couple of hoops to try their luck over the ultimate test of club runners.

Simon Hughes went off looking to break the magical three hour mark but although he was on target at 20 miles the final six was a real test. He was still able to finish in a more than respectable time of 3.16.46 to take 122nd place.

Samantha Hemming recorded a new personal best over the distance coming home in 4.41.20 to take 1450 position overall and 314th lady in what she claimed was one of the hardest courses she'd ever raced.

Twenty four hours earlier, over 6.2 miles, a group took part in the Great Birmingham 10k. Bob Jones completed the first of three 10k races in a week coming home in 47.56 in 787th place, Malcolm Beddall was 1862nd in 53.34 and Tony Noke finished in 53.55 in 1928th.

Walking football tournament tribute

Hartshill Strollers, wearing bibs, in action

A FOOTBALL tournament in memory of a much-loved player so nearly had a fairy tale ending.

The Steve Bragg Memorial Tournament was held at Summerhill School, Kingswinford, on Sunday, April 23.

The event – organised by Hartshill Strollers Walking Football Club - attracted eight teams from as far afield as Leicestershire.

The tournament was named in memory of Strollers member Steve Bragg who died from a heart attack while on holiday in Spain in April 2016. The father-of- two from Tividale was just 51.

Among the competing teams were Old Studs which consisted of Steve's old friends and his son, James.

Old Studs – a hastily-assembled outfit – won through to the final but were beaten 1-0 by LPF88, of Leicestershire.

Mark Grazier, chairman of Hartshill Strollers, said: "It was a fantastic tournament – the first in the club's history – played in perfect weather.

"It was particularly poignant that Old Studs did so well, just falling at the final hurdle. They played exceptionally well. Steve was a highly-gifted and much loved member of Hartshill Strollers. His untimely death shocked everyone.

LPF88 put out hosts Hartshill Strollers 3-1.

'WE CAME SO CLOSE' – BOSS

Spennymoor 1 Stourbridge 0

CRESTFALLEN boss Gary Hackett shared in the pain of Stourbridge supporters after Saturday's play-off defeat but insisted: "There will be more highs to come."

The curtain came down on a memorable campaign but also Stour's promotion dream with a 1-0 defeat at Spennymoor Town.

Hopes had been high among a growing fanbase, inspired by the club's continued FA Cup exploits, of a return to the second tier of non-league football after a wait of 33 years but Hackett was adamant the journey would continue.

"There has to be expectation and of course, you feel that," he said. "To be honest, I would not be managing this club if there was no expectation.

"After the final game of last season, I said we needed to improve on finishing sixth. We have finished third and got to the third round of the FA Cup having previously got to the second.

"There is that improvement. We were just unable to get over the line in a one-off shootout. There has to be time where there is a levelling-out period but I don't believe the club is at that stage yet.

"Now is not the time to be talking about next season. I need to sit down with the rest of the management team, reflect and then make decisions.

"With 20 minutes to go, we could have been talking totally differently and that's football. That's why we all have that love-hate relationship with it.

"We came so close and we all know the difficulties we experienced after the Wycombe game in terms of players moving on to pastures new.

"I firmly believe it has been a fantastic achievement to finish in the top three. One thing is without doubt, this club is moving in the right direction."

Magnanimous Hackett admitted the Moors had deserved their victory but felt referee Leigh Doughty had missed a handball by scorer Rob Ramshaw in the build-up to the decisive strike.

"We all felt it was handball and I thought the referee was in a good position," said Hackett. "I felt he officiated pretty poorly, there was a lot of man-handling going on and he seemed to let it all go.

"At times, they were wrestling with (Luke) Benbow and (Jordan) Archer and how they were not fouls when they had grabbed people around the neck I will never know."

The Glassboys had flattered to deceive in the final third until the last knockings when Luke Benbow and then Kennedy Digie forced top-class saves from home keeper Dan Lowson.

But there could be no denying the hosts deserved to win with inspirational Stour stopper Matt Gould thwarting striker Glen Taylor time and again.

Visiting boss Gary Hackett made one change from the XI that started the extra-time victory over Nantwich Town in Monday's semi-final with Kayelden Brown replacing Shrewsbury Town loanee Ethan Jones.

Home hearts were in mouths when Benbow's fierce free-kick was pushed around the post and in the chaos from the corner, Digie's close-range blast was turned around the upright by another classy Lowson stop. Gould went up for one late surge but resolute Spennymoor hacked clear.

Gary Hackett looks dejected after defeat in the final

A dejected Stuart Pierpoint as Glassboys defeated

Luke Benbow in action during the Evo-Stik Northern Premier League play-off final

Harris and Burton clinch Cradley win

CRADLEY returned to winning ways with a 48-42 win over a battling Lakeside team in the second half of last night's Monmore double-header.

The Heathens always held the advantage although they were never allowed to take full control with the Hammers offering stubborn resistance, helped by the late booking of former Cradley rider Nathan Greaves as a guest.

Heathens weren't helped by a series of mechanical issues in the early stages with Dan Greenwood and Joe Lawlor both missing rides but they took the first 5-1 of the match in a dramatic heat four.

Danny Ayres got the better of Greaves in a fiercely-contested first lap, and Greaves came to grief on the exit of turn four allowing Ryan Burton through to complete a maximum advantage.

Greaves returned to defeat home skipper Tom Perry in heat six as the Hammers narrowed the gap to four points. Conor Dwyer recovered from a sluggish opening to make a fast gate in heat eight, and he was all set for a 5-1 with Perry in heat 10 only for Lakeside's David Mason to crash heavily on the second lap.

With Mason disqualified, the rerun saw Alfie Bowtell split Perry and Dwyer, but Heathens extended their lead to 10 points in a tough heat 11 as Ayres just saw off the challenge of his former Kent team-mate Ben Morley.

But when they clashed again two races later, Ayres made an error to allow Morley and Greaves through, and as he tried to recover he sent Greaves into the fence and was disqualified, to hand the Hammers a 5-1.

However, Luke Harris and Burton ended the visitors' hopes of a comeback with a match-clinching 4-2 in heat 14, although Morley's smart pass of Ayres in the final race did ensure they took a deserved consolation league point.

Spanish trip for athletic BCT trio

THREE BCT athletes travelled to Soria in Spain to compete for Great Britain in the European Duathlon Champs.

Ed Bolland, Scott Palmer and Reece Ashfield all took part in the sprint distance race with a 5km run, 20 bike and a 2.5km run. Bolland finished 20th in 1:16:34 in the 50-54 category, Palmer finished 31st in 1:15:06 in the 35-39 category and Ashfield finished 8th in 1:06:07 in the 16-19 category.

Lauren Evans took part in the British University Sprint Tri Championships in Bucks and finished 44th out of 212 athletes following a 750m swim, 25km bike and a 5km run in a time of 1:24:16.

★★★

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